

**Leesburg Diversity Commission**  
**March 10, 2021**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes**

- Location:** Leesburg Town Hall, Lower Level Conference Room 1
- Commissioners Present:** Devon Carter (via Webex), Dana Kunzelman (via Webex), Vanessa Maddox (via Webex), Jasmin Martinez-Harris, Linda McCray, Jean-Joseph Poisson (via Webex), Mary Randolph
- Commissioners Absent:** None
- Others Present:** Vice Mayor Fernando “Marty” Martinez (via Webex)  
Betsy Arnett, Public Information Officer  
Officer Michael Drogin, Leesburg Police (via Webex)
- Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:**

- Chair McCray added an item of new business (subcommittee assignments). The amended agenda was approved.

**Approval of Minutes**

- The minutes of the February 2, 2021 regular meeting and the February 21, 2021 work session were approved unanimously as presented, on a motion by Commissioner Martinez-Harris, seconded by Vice Chair Poisson.

**Petitioners**

- None

**New Business**

- **COVID Impacts on Minority Communities**  
Dr. Elain Perry and Magaly Fagan, with the Loudoun County Health Department, gave the commission a brief overview of the current COVID situation in Loudoun. Although they have limited information because most demographic information is self-reported, they confirmed that COVID is affecting the minority community disproportionately among total cases and hospitalizations. Deaths tend to be related more to age than to other demographic factors. Ms. Fagan, who is the county’s care coordinator for COVID, talked about the SafetyNet program which was launched in October 2020, to provide financial and other assistance to families affected by the pandemic. Rent is the biggest

need, complicated by the fact that many of those affected do not have formal leases and pay their rent in cash. When asked, she confirmed that there are families in Leesburg who have exhausted all of the assistance resources available to them. According to Dr. Perry, the most assistance they need right now, in addition to multi-lingual staffing, is in getting the word out about the twice-weekly testing events, particularly to

- **Subcommittee Assignments**

Chair McCray made the following subcommittee assignments:

- Marketing – Dana Kunzelman and Jasmin Martinez-Harris
- Social Media – Vanessa Maddox, Devon Carter, and Dana Kunzelman
- Arts & Diversity – Jasmin Martinez-Harris and Devon Carter

- **Proposed Commission Name Change and Charter Changes**

- **Name Change:** One of the recommendations from the February 21<sup>st</sup> work session was to propose to the Town Council that the commission’s name be changed to “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission”. After some discussion, on a motion by Vice Chair Poisson, seconded by Commissioner Martinez-Harris, the item was tabled to the April meeting.
- **Charter Change:** After discussion, the commission voted 4 to 3 to forward the following proposed Town Code changes to the Town Council.

Sec. 2-233. - Leesburg Diversity Commission.

(a) *Established.* The Leesburg Diversity Commission is hereby created and established.

(b) *Duties.* The Leesburg Diversity Commission's mission is to help foster diversity and inclusion within the community at large.

(c) *Additional powers and duties.* The following shall be additional powers and duties of the Leesburg Diversity Commission:

(1) To ~~make recommendations to the town council that potentially~~ enhance the Town of Leesburg government's ability to communicate with and to deliver services more effectively to minority residents and business owners within the town;

(2) To work with the Leesburg Economic Development Commission and town staff on a regular outreach effort to the minority business community in

order to increase awareness of town services, and to understand potential opportunities to do business with the town;

- (3) To ~~make recommendations to the town council that provide the Town of Leesburg with the opportunity to~~ enhance and celebrate the town's diverse community;
- (4) The duties of the Commission shall not include discussion of any individual employment action or information or the investigation, examination or analysis of hiring practices by town staff.

- **Proposed Outreach Efforts**

- **HOA Outreach:** Chair McCray thanked Commissioner Carter for his work putting together the list of HOAs. She will be adding it to her larger outreach list and sharing the combined list with the full commission.
- **Flower & Garden Festival:** Commissioner Martinez-Harris said that the commission is waiting on confirmation from Parks & Recreation about a booth. She is putting together seed starter kits as a giveaway and hopes to have at least 100 kits. For the kits, she got zinnia seeds donated and asked that commissioners save their cardboard egg cartons. She suggested #weareleesburg as a tagline and commissioners agreed.
- **Social Media:** The commission voted unanimously to request permission from Town Council to set up Diversity Commission social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

### Old Business

- **“We Are Leesburg” Video**

Commissioner Martinez-Harris reported that she and Chair McCray had met with the chair and vice chair of the Commission on Public Art to discuss possible collaborative efforts. One of the first projects COPA will be helping with is the We Are Leesburg videos, capturing people at the Flower & Garden Festival. COPA has arranged a professional videographer to donate his time to the project. The previously received videos will be incorporated into the final video.

### Staff Reports

- Ms. Arnett advised that she will send guidelines for subcommittee meetings to ensure that commissioners stay within the requirements of the open public meetings act.
- Officer Drogin advised that Chief Brown had intended to attend but was called away at the last minute. The chief sends his apologies and plans to attend an upcoming meeting.

### **Council Member Comments**

- None

### **Commissioner Comments**

- **Commissioner Carter** noted the April is Arab-American Heritage Month, Autism Awareness Month, and National Volunteer Month, all offering good opportunities for social media posts and volunteer opportunities.
- **Commissioner Maddox** asked to confirm the dates for the Flower & Garden Festival and whether commissioners were expected to be there. (Answer: It is April 17 and 18. Commissioners are encouraged to help with the booth, but not required.)

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 7 p.m.