

**Leesburg Diversity Commission**  
**May 12, 2021**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**Location:** Leesburg Town Hall, Lower Level Conference Room 1

**Commissioners Present:** Devon Carter (via Webex)  
Dana Kunzelman (via Webex, joined at 7:27 p.m.)  
Jasmin Martinez-Harris (via Webex, joined at 7:40 p.m.)  
Linda McCray  
Jean-Joseph Poisson (via Webex)  
Mary Randolph

**Commissioners Absent:** Vanessa Maddox

**Others Present:** Susan BerryHill, Director of Planning & Zoning  
Betsy Arnett, Public Information Officer  
Officer Michael Drogin, Leesburg Police (via Webex)

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:**

- The agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Commissioner Randolph, seconded by Commissioner Carter.

**Approval of Minutes**

- The minutes of the April 14, 2021 regular meeting were approved unanimously as presented, on a motion by Commissioner Randolph, seconded by Commissioner Carter.

**Petitioners**

- None

**Commissioner Comments**

- **Commissioner Carter** said that the Flower & Garden Festival was an amazing opportunity to connect with the community. One comment he heard from several people is the need for a digital literacy program, to teach people online security and safety as well as how to use the many tools (like Zoom) that are being used today as a result of COVID.
- **Commissioner Randolph** noted that a Juneteenth celebration at Ida Lee is being planned, and could the Diversity Commission possibly participate. She will get the

organizer's contact information and pass along to Chair McCray.

- **Vice Chair Poisson** alerted the commissioners to an article in the Loudoun Times Mirror regarding the Town Council's interest in creating a citizen police advisory commission. He believes that black and brown people do not need education about the police; that the police cannot police themselves; and instead the Town needs an oversight body that will have an impact on how the police do their job.

### Chair Comments

- Chair McCray thanked the commissioners for their participation at the Flower & Garden Festival. She's received great feedback from the event. She provided the following updates:
  - #weareleesburg Video: The videographer is adding footage of Leesburg to "fill out" the video. It should be completed by the next meeting.
  - The Loudoun Podcast: Troy Taggart, with TPow Studios, contacted her about being interviewed for his podcast. If anyone is interested in participating, please let her know.
  - Acoustic on the Green concerts will be starting on June 5 and run through August 28, on Saturdays at 7 p.m., on the courthouse lawn.
  - May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Jewish American Heritage Month.

She reminded commissioners to send her ideas for Diversity Commission initiatives and goals to achieve. One idea she had was for commissioners to each do a ride-along with a Leesburg police officer. The program is currently suspended due to COVID, but once it starts up again, this program would be a good way for commissioners to highlight the good things that the police do.

She asked for an update on the charter changes and Facebook page requests that the commission forwarded to Town Council several months ago. Ms. Arnett will follow up.

### New Business

- **Draft Town Plan Feedback.** Susan BerryHill, director of Planning and Zoning, led the commission in a discussion on the draft Town Plan, with a focus on the economic and housing strategies. Ms. BerryHill's summary of the discussion is included in Attachment 1. Following the discussion, Chair McCray offered the Diversity Commission's assistance with community outreach and education efforts. Ms. BerryHill closed by asking commissioners to send her any further comments they may have.
- **Diversity Consortium.** As Commissioner Maddox was not at the meeting, this item was deferred to the June meeting.

- **#weareleesburg Social Media Campaign:** Chair McCray suggested that the commission create an on-going social media campaign, based on the graphics that Commissioner Kunzelman created for the Flower & Garden Festival and asked commissioners to bring ideas for that campaign to the June meeting.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Attachment 1  
Summary of Draft Town Plan Discussion

1. Proud of Town's diversity. The Commission expressed pride in the diversity of the Town. The Draft should reflect that.
2. Residential Management HOA's and Companies. Management companies and HOA's are not always transparent about fees imposed on residents and some fees are questionable as to their purpose. Consequently residents are cost-burdened with additional fees on top of rents. People don't know where to go to get help with this issue. This has led to a trust problem with the Town as well as trust problem generally. If possible, the Draft should somehow try to address this issue.
3. More inclusive language. The Draft should be reviewed to see if more inclusive language can be used throughout the document.
4. Affordable Housing. Affordable housing should be located in close proximity to where jobs are located. Further, it should have convenient access to public transportation. The Commission noted that affordable housing is a sensitive issue and they questioned whether the Leesburg community would welcome more affordable housing. That said, this is an important issue for the community.
5. Public Transportation. Routes should be examined to see if they meet the needs of the community and to see if changes or additions should be made to make it easier, and less time-consuming, to get to jobs and shopping. Affordable housing, public transportation, and job locations are all interrelated and should be planned accordingly.
6. High School population. Programs are needed for high school employment during summer and particularly in the year after graduation. The Draft should include policy direction to focus on this.
7. Communication and education are needed. To reach all people in the Leesburg community about affordable housing and jobs, there should be a greater emphasis on communication and education to let people know what is being done to attract jobs and encourage more affordable housing.