

Leesburg Diversity Commission
June 9, 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 (via Webex)
Linda McCray

Commissioners Absent: Jean-Joseph Poisson
Mary Randolph

Others Present: Britta Neel, EDC Liaison
Chief Greg Brown, Leesburg Police (via Webex)
Betsy Arnett, Public Information Officer

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

- Chair McCray added Chief Brown and Britta Neel, the EDC Liaison, to the agenda, after Staff Reports. The revised agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Kunzelman.

Approval of Minutes

- The minutes of the May 12, 2021 regular meeting were approved unanimously as presented, on a motion by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Kunzelman.

Petitioners

- None

Commissioner Comments

- **Commissioner Carter** said a resident, Margaret Brown, complimented the town on the accessibility of its website and the UserWay tool that allows users to increase the contrast, highlight links, increase the size of the cursor, and make other visual adjustments to the website to assist visually impaired people navigate more easily.

- **Commissioner Kunzelman** commented that she is hoping to see the commission move forward some of the items that have been stalled for several months.
- **Commissioner Maddox** noted that at the last Board of Architectural Review, a member of the BAR made insensitive and racially charged comments in regard to the proposed Underground Railroad-theme mural. She is distressed that no action has been taken and no public apology has been made. She also invited commissioners to participate in the upcoming Loudoun Housing Stories, a virtual housing summit, on June 30, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., which is being sponsored by New Virginia Majorities, the NAACP Loudoun Chapter, and Black Wall Street Loudoun. She will send everyone the link.
- **Commissioner Martinez-Harris** said that she would like to see if we can get more recognition for the LGBTQ+ community than just a post on a Facebook page. She relayed that several members of the LGBTQ+ community had mentioned to her at the Flower & Garden Festival that they do not feel the Town does enough to make them feel welcome and seen in the Town. She spoke with COPA and got their support for placing rainbow lights on Town Hall. She thought the lights had been displayed in the past and wondered why they were displayed this year (Ms. Arnett responded that to the best of her knowledge rainbow lights had not been displayed in the past, but she would check on it).

Staff Report

- Ms. Arnett reported that June is “Homeownership Month” and Loudoun County is offering several virtual “lunch and learn” events. She will share information about these events on the Town’s Facebook page.

She also advised the Loudoun Health Department is partnering with Loudoun County Public Schools to hold localized vaccination clinics. One will be at Leesburg Elementary School. Once the date is determined, she will share to the Town’s Facebook page.

The NAACP Loudoun Chapter and the Loudoun Freedom Center are hosting a Juneteenth march from the courthouse to the Orion Anderson Memorial at the W&OD Trail. The march will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 19.

As a follow up to the commission’s request for guidance regarding making statements, Ms. Arnett advised that staff discussed the issue and will be seeking direction from Council. Their decision may impact the commission’s request for its own social media accounts.

Comments by Chief Brown

- Chief Brown stated that he wanted to join the meeting and say hello, since Officer Drogin is on extended leave until August. He pledged the LPD’s support to the Diversity Commission and noted that he and Chair McCray had had several conversations about

public and community outreach, particularly as things open up after COVID.

EDC Liaison

- Britta Neel introduced herself as the liaison from the Economic Development Commission. She is a local realtor and has three children. All of the commissioners introduced themselves

Chair Comments

- Chair McCray also noted that it is Pride Month and Homeownership Month. She has been working behind the scenes on putting up Pride flags and has been going back and forth on that, and will bring that up under new business

She has received a draft version of the We Are Leesburg video from the videographer, which was shown, and invited comments and suggestions for edits. Commissioners had some issues with the sound quality that be the result of showing it via Webex. Ms. Arnett will send everyone a link to the video. Commissioners suggested adding the Town logo, “#weareleesburg”, and a scroll of “We are Leesburg” in other languages to the end of the video. Chair McCray will follow up with the videographer.

New Business

- **Juneteenth:** Chair McCray advised that she paid an entry fee for all commissioners to the BURG Family Reunion’s Juneteenth Celebration at Ida Lee Park on Saturday, June 19. She will be there after 2 p.m. Commissioner Maddox noted that her business will have a booth at the event.
- **Pride Month Recognition:** Chair McCray said that she had investigated putting up Pride Month flags in downtown, but with the short turnaround time, was unable to come up with a workable plan. In order to not have similar timing problems with other monthly recognitions, she moved that:

In an effort to create a more welcoming environment and in the spirit of solidarity and inclusion with the citizens and businesses of Leesburg, the Diversity Commission recommends the Leesburg Town Council utilize digital and/or non-digital art in an effort to help celebrate and educate its residents about the dynamic demographic landscape of our Town. The Diversity Commission will provide a calendar of events with suggested holidays for the TOL council to recognize/celebrate for monthly observances.

Commissioner Carter seconded the motion. After some discussion about the importance of doing more than a token recognition once a year, the motion passed 5-0-2.

- **Digital Inclusion Program:** Commissioner Carter moved that the Diversity Commission recommend to the Town Council the implementation of a digital inclusion program available to all town residents, to decrease barriers to access to town resources, expand overall digital literacy, and encourage ongoing digital education. The motion was

seconded by Commissioner Martinez-Harris and passed 5-0-2.

- **Diversity Consortium:** This item was deferred to the July meeting.
- **Planning Subcommittee:** Chair McCray withdrew this item for the time being.
- **EDC Efforts to Reach Minority Businesses:** Chair McCray and Ms. Neal are planning to go door-to-door to minority businesses, to introduce themselves and ensure the businesses are aware of resources available to them. They hope to complete the visits by the end of July, and welcome any other commissioners who would like to join them.

Old Business

- **Status of Commission Request for Social Media Accounts:** Ms. Arnett reported that Vice Mayor Martinez has not requested that this item be placed on a Council work session agenda for discussion. She recommended that commissioners contact Vice Mayor Martinez directly. She also noted that the Town Attorney concurs with the previous Town Attorney's recommendation regarding the need for liability insurance.

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

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