



Leesburg Diversity Commission Regular Meeting

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 • 7:00 p.m.
Lower Level Conference Room 1
Leesburg Town Hall • 25 West Market Street

Meeting Agenda

- Call to Order
- Approval of Electronic Participation (if necessary)
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - Minutes of August 10, 2022 Meeting
- Petitioners
- Commissioner Comments
- Council Member Comments
- Liaison Reports
 - Economic Development Commission
 - Commission on Public Art
- Staff Reports
 - Public Information Office
 - Police Department
- Chair Comments
- Upcoming Events
- Old Business
 - Police Department Latino Festival (debrief)
 - What is Racism? video
 - Social Media Inquiries to Town Attorney
- New Business
 - Attendance policy reminder
 - Commission vacancy
- Adjournment

**Leesburg Diversity Commission
Aug. 10, 2022
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Location: Leesburg Town Hall, Lower Level Conference Room 1

Commissioners Present: Devon Carter
Enrique Gonzalez
Vanessa Maddox
Mary Randolph

Commissioners Absent: Dana Kunzelman
Jasmin Martinez-Harris
Jean-Joseph Poisson

Others Present: Officer Wael Abilmona, Leesburg Police Department

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

- Agenda was approved as presented, on a motion by Commissioner Randolph, seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez.

Approval of Minutes:

- The minutes of the June 8, 2022, regular meeting were approved as presented, on a motion by Commissioner Gonzalez, seconded by Commissioner Maddox. There was no quorum for the scheduled July 13 meeting.

Commissioner Comments:

- **Commissioner Randolph** said she was glad she made it to the meeting, and apologized for her recent absences as she had several deaths in the family.
- **Commissioner Gonzalez** said he thought National Night Out was very successful.
- **Commissioner Maddox** welcomed the new staff liaison to the commission, Public Information Officer Kara Rodriguez.

Staff Reports:

- **Public Information Office:** PIO Rodriguez briefly introduced herself and said she was excited to work with the commission.

- **Police Department:** Officer Abilmona said the Leesburg Police Department's ride-along program had been suspended again, but the decision will be revisited in September. He said he thought National Night Out had a good turnout.

Chair Comments:

- **Chair Carter** thanked commissioners for attending recent community events. He said he is in the middle of narrating the guided African American history tour for the Town's walking app. He asked if the commission's community resources database could be published to make it more accessible to the public. He said the Employment Fair had good turnout with 60 to 70 participants, and about 32 who were walk-ins.

Upcoming Events:

- **Fiesta Latina:** Officer Abilmona spoke briefly about the police department's upcoming Fiesta Latina on Aug. 27. PIO Rodriguez said she would email the fliers out to commissioners. Chair Carter said he planned to attend.

Old Business:

- **Juneteenth BURG Family Reunion (debrief):** Commissioner Randolph attended the event and said there were a lot of people there. She said she wished the Town had put the event information on the sign at its entryway on East Market Street. Commissioner Maddox also said the event had a great turnout, but it will be tough to top the attendance from the 2021 event.
- **Employment Fair (debrief):** Chair Carter said there were 16 employers present at the job fair, mostly from the service industry. He said some of the attendees were looking for employers in the finance and software development industries so it may be a good idea for future job fairs to have more industries present. He suggested doing a follow-up survey to employers to gauge their feedback. Commissioner Gonzalez said he spoke to every employer that was present at the event and they all wanted to participate again. He suggested having a job fair more frequently, possibly quarterly or every six months. Commissioner Maddox suggested using the #gethired hashtag for employers to post their jobs there. She and Commissioner Gonzalez said a hybrid approach, with both in-person job fairs and online capabilities, would be a good idea going forward. Commissioner Randolph suggested mailing information about job fairs to Black and Hispanic churches so they can publicize it to their congregations. Chair Carter said he received good feedback from attendees on the mailings that went to their households.
- **National Night Out (debrief):** Officer Abilmona said it would have been nice to have more activities available to attendees. He said he, Chief Brown and PIO Drogin attended the Sycamore Hills event after leaving the NNO event at Leesburg Mobile Park and the property owner had provided a lot more activities and vendors to that community. He said having the May 1 event at the Leesburg Mobile Park made a lot more people in that community comfortable in coming out to the Aug. 2 NNO. Commissioner Gonzalez said

150 books were distributed to children at the Leesburg Mobile Park NNO. Commissioner Randolph questioned what the intent of NNO is, and whether people of different races are intermingling at the event. Officer Abilmona said it is an important opportunity for community members to see police officers outside of their job, and it can build a bond between the department and local residents. He said over 80% of police departments in the nation participate in the annual event. Chair Carter said he had a great time and planned to attend every year going forward. He said his one criticism was that the event felt unintentionally political, with candidates for local office milling around the crowd. There was general agreement that there was nothing that could be done to keep politicians away from these events.

- **What is Racism? Video:** Chair Carter said he didn't think there were enough commissioners willing to participate in the video themselves, and suggested soliciting videos from community members. Commissioner Randolph suggested the video should focus on Why is There Racism, or there could be videos on both subjects. Commissioner Maddox said the video should be done on a wider scale, similar to the We Are Leesburg video.
- **Social Media Inquiries to Town Attorney:** Chair Carter said he will follow up with Commissioner Kunzelman, who was not present at the meeting, on this subject. Commissioner Maddox said she did not understand why the commission could not have its own section on the Town's Facebook page. Upon questioning by Commissioner Randolph, Chair Carter said the concern is that the commission is not able to be accessible to as many members of the community without a social media presence. He said the desire has been for the commission to have its own dedicated social media page, but there were concerns voiced by the Town Attorney since the commission does not have its own liability insurance.

New Business

- **Loudoun Museum mural/advising on future public art projects:** Chair Carter said he was disappointed that the commission was not consulted before the mural was approved by the Town Council since the subject matter is directly related to the commission's mission. He said he had no issue with the content of the mural, but was annoyed that commissioners were never looped in. He suggested exploring cross-commission collaboration on projects like this, and for the commission to be proactive on projects like this rather than reactionary. Commissioner Gonzalez suggested that whenever there is a public art project that is historical in nature that there could be a joint meeting held with the Commission on Public Art. He said COPA and council members are probably not aware of their concerns.
- **Title VI input:** PIO Rodriguez spoke briefly about a collaborative staff effort to make the Town website more compliant under Title VI regulations. She asked commissioners to send her any feedback on how to make the website more accessible and

accommodating to community members. Chair Carter said he thought the current button on the top right corner of the website was a nice addition.

- **Commissioner Gonzalez** asked if the playground/park area at Leesburg Mobile Park was public or private property, and said it was greatly in need of maintenance. PIO Rodriguez said the land was owned by the new property owner. Officer Abilmona said he was under the impression that the property owner was going to perform maintenance on the park area and said the INMED nonprofit was working with the owner on being a resource for the community.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2022 at 7 p.m.

