

**City of Hyattsville
Race & Equity Task Force
January 25, 2022 7:00 PM
Zoom
Minutes**

Present

Task Force Members:

- Malcolm Clarke
- Jennifer Gafford
- LaToya Robinson
- Rodrigo Blanco
- Alicia (ah-**lee**-syah) Freemyn
- Daniel (dah-nee-**ehl**) Vallejos-Avila

Staff:

- Staff Liaison Jan Guszynski
- Deputy Director of Community Services Cheri Everhart

Guests:

- Marshall Marshall

Members Absent:

- Daniel Amador

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM by chair Clarke

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Roll Call

Acknowledgement of Meeting Guests

2. Cultural Programming Ideas

Cultural Programming Ideas

- CE: Looking for feedback on cultural programming for cultural heritage months. No in-person events yet
 - o AF: It would be helpful to see what has been done before.
- CE: Will send Jan G. an email with information about examples of things that have been done in the past. Including what worked and what didn't. Items that did not have high participation will be identified.
 - o Jan G.: Members can email Jan and Malcolm directly as they come up with ideas. Jan can collect ideas and send back to Cheri. Looking for Black History Month ideas as soon as possible.

- CE: Looking for ideas not just for this year or this February, but for the future as well. They are building out calendar of events.
 - o LR: Is there a conversation about inviting the community to be part of the planning? Hyattsville is welcoming to its residents. They have a welcome package for people moving to Hyattsville. Hyattsville is filled with a lot of people from everywhere. When the city puts out the monthly newsletter, can a survey be put out? How can we get everyone involved? We should celebrate everybody's culture all the time, instead of Black people in Black History Month. Her suggestion is to figure out a way that the community can be involved even if we have to do it country by country.
- CE: Going to send a list of the months and anything that worked or didn't work.
 - o Marshall (chat): For your information, the city of Hyattsville used to have a gathering called "Breaking Bread during Black History Month to celebrate and engage all cultures in the City... it went away about 10 or more years ago.
 - o AF (chat): One thing that might be really helpful, is to consider doing a diasporic Black event (meaning involving the stories, connected experiences of Black people from Latin America, The Caribbean, and the Continent).
 - o LR: Hyattsville is small. We share space with College Park, Universities and colleges that our residents attend. LR is a professor at Prince George's Community College. The area she works in is culturally responsible teaching. Important to embrace all cultures. Meeting people where they are, reduces racism. We should include educators, people who work at institutions in program planning. Want to move forward to being an equitable and anti-racist community.
 - o AF (chat): Would he be willing to host an artist talk?
- CE: Open opportunities to partnerships.
- Jan G: Spoke with City Administrator, Tracey Douglas. Is there an author she floated by CE?
 - o CE: Yes. His name is: Lawrence T. Brown. He is the founder and director of the Black Butterfly Project <https://theblackbutterflyproject.com/>, and equity organization in Baltimore, MD. She sat in on a talk he gave. She indicated that she had spoken with him about his availability. If it's something that we can do this year, he very booked, but we can look at
- Jennifer G: Is the census information available for Hyattsville, so that we can see what Hyattsville "looks like"?
 - o Jan G: Needs to pull the information for another project. The initial #s were released. We surmised that the demographic fabric has changed quite a bit. We have gone from 18,000 residents to 21,000. That's a significant amount of growth. Because of this other project, Jan G. will pull the data and share.
- LR: Businesses – there are people who have restaurants that represent different countries. One way that people come together culturally, is with food.
- RB: Sometimes more hesitant to go to an event if he doesn't feel a personal connection to it. Who are the events planned by?
 - o CE: planned and led by city staff
- RB: We should involve community members in planning
- CE: Yes, thank you

(Cheri Everhart signed off)

3. Administrative Announcements/Debriefs

Departures

- MC: Allison Swift departed
 - o DV-A: In the house of reps, you don't have to live in a congressional district. Maybe we can continue to keep members that move to a different community if it is a neighboring community.
 - o Jan G: What we have experienced, is that they focus on their new community.
- DV-A: The demographic of Hyattsville is 4% Asian American, Latino 40%, Black 29%.
 - o MC: Can you send the data to us for review?
 - o Jan G.: I will pull census data. I know that we have increased resident count by 4000, but I have not been told about the number of each grouping. Interesting to take a look together.
- DV-A: Latoya you mentioned businesses. There is a pupusería that appears to be Salvadoreño. 40% of the Latinos are Central American. Some are Mexican American like me.

Annual Committee Calendar and Survey

- Jan G.: If we meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month, the February 22 date is taken by the City Council meeting. When chair Clarke is ready, we will do a quick poll to see when we want to meet in Feb. If you'd like to move to adopt at the end we can.
- MC: Reads off calendar. Vote to approve calendar with the exception of February meeting date.
- Calendar approved.

Mural Project Update

- Jan G: Reminder about Hyattsville Committee Member Survey
 - o MC: Dropped the survey link in the chat
- Jan G: Mural project update - waiting for two additional quotes from signage fabricator. The proposal was to approve cutouts that spell Hyattsville. They would be secured in the concrete to keep them upright because we switched from the wall to a freestanding installation. The one quote we received is a dollar amount higher than what the treasurer will allow. We need two additional quotes. Department of Public Works is involved. We are using two of their vendors. The nice thing is that the letters can be done in factory and in studio. Once the work is approved, we won't be tied up by weather conditions.

Equity Officer Update

- Jan G.: Equity Officer update- there is a candidate that City Administrator, Tracey Douglas is interviewing tomorrow. The city would like to see more candidates come in. Can the committee take a look at the job description and see if there are any people that we know that might be a fit? Increased the salary rate. One of the trade associations provided feedback that the salary range was working against us. It is a

specialized role. We felt it was time to appeal to you all for talent since your networks run deep.

- Jennifer G.: The position was previously advertised as a shared role with Takoma Park and is not a position that Hyattsville has decided to have on its own. Previously it was advertised as a contract position that was not benefits eligible. Has that changed?
- Jan G. Yes. It is now advertised as a benefits eligible city position.
 - Jennifer G.: That change should be advertised. The contract position does not speak to the long term commitment of Hyattsville to the Equity position and its efforts. Benefits eligible is good.
- Jan G.: Is there any additional feedback on that? That is an interesting point that I will pass on.
 - AF: Agree with Jennifer. No benefits would not be equitable.

4. Equity Plan Assignments

- MC: Categories are –
 - Community Policing
 - Community Engagement
 - Housing
 - Jobs
 - Transportation
 - Aging and People with Disabilities.

Assignments

- Housing:
 - Primary- DV-A
 - Reviewer- LR
- Community Policing:
 - Primary- AF
 - Reviewer- Jennifer G.
- Community Engagement:
 - Primary- LR
 - Reviewer- AF
- Transportation:
 - Primary- MC
 - Reviewer- RB
- Aging and People w/ Disabilities:
 - Primary- RB
 - Reviewer- DV-A
- Jobs:
 - Primary- Jennifer G.
 - Reviewer- MC
- Malcolm: Discussion on presentation dates in next month's meeting.

Other

- Jan G.: Reminder about the meeting on February 10th regarding American Rescue Plan Act funds. Hyattsville received \$17.9 million dollars. Residents should have received a mailer with information about how to provide feedback on what areas those funds should go to.

5. Open Discussion

- Jennifer G.: Do we partner with other Hyattsville Advisory committees?
 - o Jan G.: Previously tried to partner with Safety committee, but they were in flux for a period of time. There was an attempt to get a meeting with them in 2019. We couldn't get a meeting running because they didn't have the membership. The Chief of Police also left the administration and that might have contributed to the limbo.
 - o LR: There was conversation about meeting with Health and Wellness committee. Council Member Joanne Waszczak organized a conversation with Delegate Alonzo Washington and Community Policing Committee. Notes are posted on City website.
 - o Jan G.: We can invite them to our meetings.

6. Adjourn Meeting

Review Agenda for Next Meeting

- Jan G. to present information on census data
- Mural project update
- Equity Officer update
- Timing of Equity Plan presentations to be discussed
- Re-introductions of task force members

Rodrigo Blanco moved to adjourn, Daniel Vallejos-Avila seconded.

Adjourned 8:38 PM