



This does not represent a verbatim transcript of the Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting. Any questions regarding the agenda and discussions outlined below should be directed to the Department of Community Development at 703.787.7380 or at community.development@herndon-va.gov.

HERNDON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
Thursday
October 20, 2022

The Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HDEIC) met in public session on Thursday, October 20, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room at the Herndon Police Department, 397 Herndon Parkway, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were Councilmember Pradip Dhakal (Chair), Rachel Eisenfeld, Sabrina Hossain, Andrew Lacher, Keven LeBlanc, Soma Ramesh, and Alex Rodriguez.

Committee Members Syed Iftikhar, Arati Sigdel Parajuli, Donielle Scherff, and Eileen Villegas were absent.

Staff members present: William Ashton, Town Manager; Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development; Collin Okoniewski, Planning Operations Manager; and Aaron Zoellick, Assistant Town Clerk.

WELCOME

Councilmember Dhakal, opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

1. Roll Call

For the record, Mr. Okoniewski stated that seven out of eleven members were present for the meeting.

2. Comments by the Chair

Councilmember Dhakal extended a welcome to all members of the Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HDEIC). Councilmember Dhakal provided a brief update on issues discussed at the last Herndon Town Council meeting, including: school ratings, economic development program, and Town rebranding. Councilmember Dhakal reminded those in attendance of the upcoming Diwali celebration.

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3. Introduction of William Ashton, Town Manager

Councilmember Dhakal invited Town Manager William Ashton to speak to the committee.

William Ashton provided brief comments regarding his background with the Town and his enthusiasm for the work of the HDEIC. Mr. Ashton invited committee members to ask questions of him. Committee members offered questions related to data available regarding Herndon residents, language diversity among Herndon police officers, and concern about HOAs in downtown redevelopment. Mr. Ashton and Lisa Gilleran responded to the committee member questions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilmember Dhakal inquired of the committee if they had any additional items they would like added to the agenda.

Committee Member Lacher asked for an agenda item to be added to discuss whether the HDEIC has the necessary makeup to be representative of the Herndon population. Committee Member Eisenfeld agreed, particularly in the need for a younger demographic to be represented and seconded the motion.

As a result, the following item was added to the agenda following item number ‘7. *Prioritization of Initiatives*’:

8. Discussion on Committee Composition

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4. September 15, 2022, HDEIC Draft Minutes

On motion by Committee Member Rodriguez, seconded by Committee Member LeBlanc, the minutes from the Thursday, September 15, 2022, public meeting were approved by a vote of 7-0. The vote was: Councilmember Pradip Dhakal (Chair), Rachel Eisenfeld, Sabrina Hossain, Andrew Lacher, Keven LeBlanc, Soma Ramesh, and Alex Rodriguez voting “Aye.”

NEW BUSINESS

5. Staff Presentation

Councilmember Dhakal called on Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development, to deliver the staff presentation.

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Ms. Gilleran delivered a presentation titled “HDEIC Initiatives” dated October 20, 2022, which is on file in the Town Clerk’s Office.

Staff recommended the following actions/initiatives to the HDEIC as a result of the committees compiled initiatives from the September 15, 2022 meeting:

Staff Recommendations-Events

- ❑ Schedule open mic for future HDEIC meeting
 - Identify appropriate mode of outreach to all residents of the community
- ❑ Commence process towards planning or participating in an event
 - Invite Director of Parks and Recreation to a future meeting to obtain critical information

Staff Recommendations-Programs

- ❑ Invite Jay Garant, Ignite Program FCPS, to a future meeting
 - Current programs and their success
 - Underserved students
 - Opportunities to partner
- ❑ Invite Dennis Holste, Herndon Economic Development, to a future meeting
 - Current programs
 - Future opportunities
- ❑ Invite John Boylan, President & CEO of Dulles Regional and Chamber of Commerce, and Nury Mena, Committee Chair Hispanic Business Council, Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce to a future meeting
 - Current programs
 - Future opportunities
- ❑ Committee volunteers
 - At future meeting determine purpose of outreach to 501C3s
 - Members of the committee volunteer to find and communicate with specific 501C3s
 - Report back to the committee on specified meeting date
 - Analyze county reports to determine where extra efforts may be needed
 - Member of the committee volunteers to perform research and report back on a specific meeting date
 - Analyze county reports to I.D. other less evident forms of diversity
 - Member of the committee volunteers to perform research and report back on a specific meeting date
 - Creation of a “safe space” for all ages providing a cost-free place to relax/interact and spend time

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- Two members of the committee volunteer to work with appropriate staff to define the necessary characteristics of such a space

Staff Recommendations-Diversification

- Invite Anne Curtis, Chief Communication Officer, to a future meeting
 - Current communications program
 - Constraints and opportunities
 - Establish criteria calendar inclusion
 - Explore possible modes of outreach for communities with implicit distrust of government

Following the staff presentation Committee Members offered questions related to the following topics: the definition of “drop out” used by Fairfax County Schools, updates to website with language translation, use of social media to promote Town events, increased training (to include but not limited to diversity, cyber security, workplace harassment) for onboarding Town Council members, diverse hiring of Town staff. Ms. Gilleran responded to Committee Member questions.

6. Discussion of Initiatives

Council Member Dhakal called Collin Okoniewski, Planning Operations Manager, to facilitate a discussion of committee initiatives. Mr. Okoniewski asked the committee members to state what their top priority was for HDEIC initiatives. Committee members voiced an overall approval of the staff recommendations on actions/priorities the committee could take and welcomed the idea of bringing in Town staff and community leaders to gain more information. In addition to the staff recommended actions/priorities the following topics were added as priority initiatives:

- Researching and implementing a data gathering tool that the committee can use to evaluate needs, current programs, and future programs in the community.
- A skateboarding event that can showcase the skatepark within the Town, as well as skating and boarding related businesses in town.
- Gaining more information on assisting school aged children through the use of public-private partnerships and building connections between children and mentors in the community.

Committee Member Eisenfeld stated that she would like to take on the “Safe Space” initiative as a personal agenda item. As a result, the “Safe Space” concept was added as a top priority to be researched for an upcoming meeting.

Committee Member Ramesh delivered a presentation titled “Building Economic Inclusivity Amongst Diverse Groups” which is on file with the Town Clerk’s Office.

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7. Prioritization of Initiatives

Mr. Okoniewski stated that the Committee Members should identify actions to take at the next meeting and before the next meeting. Mr. Okoniewski stated that Committee Member Eisenfeld has already volunteered to work with Town staff to develop the “Safe Space” initiative. Committee Member Eisenfeld asked if another Committee Member was willing to assist them. Committee Member Hossain volunteered.

Councilmember Dhakal recommended inviting Anne Curtis, Chief Communication Officer, and Cindy Roeder, Director of Parks and Recreation, to the next meeting of the HDEIC.

Councilmember Dhakal stated that they will work with Committee Member Ramesh on developing education initiatives. Committee Member Lacher recommended giving interim research more time before reporting back to the Committee.

Mr. Okoniewski presented a draft initiative form developed by Committee Member LeBlanc for Committee Members to submit recommendation and action items to the Committee. The form was well received by the committee and was recommended for use by committee members as they develop actions/initiatives to recommend to the Town Council.

Mr. Okoniewski recapped the priorities set by the HDEIC for upcoming meetings. As such, Anne Curtis, Chief Communication Officer, and Cindy Roeder, Director of Parks and Recreation will be invited to the next HDEIC meeting in December. Interim research on the “Safe Space” initiative (Eisenfeld/Hossain), as well as the educational initiative (Dhakal/Ramesh) will be discussed at the following meeting of the HDEIC in February 2023.

8. Discussion on Committee Composition

Discussion was tabled due to time constraints. Committee members asked that the item appear on the December 2022 HDEIC meeting agenda.

COMMENTS

9. Comments from the Staff Members

There were no comments from the Staff Members.

10. Comments from the Committee Members

There were no comments from the Committee Members

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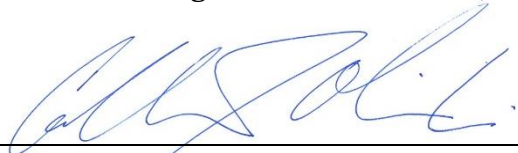
FUTURE HDEIC SCHEDULE

11. Confirmation of Next Meeting Date

Committee members agreed that the next meeting should be held on Thursday, December 1st, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.



**Collin J. Okoniewski
Planning Operations Manager
Acting Clerk Boards & Commissions**