

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
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 2, 2023

The Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HDEIC) met in public session on Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room at the Herndon Police Department, 397 Herndon Parkway, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were Chair Pradip Dhakal, Vice Chair Soma Ramesh, Committee Members Rachel Eisenfeld, Sabrina Hossain, Andrew Lacher, Alex Rodriguez, Arati Sigdel Parajuli, and Eileen Villegas

Staff Members present: Anne Curtis, Chief Communications Officer; Cindy Roeder, Director of Parks & Recreation; Elizabeth Gilleran, Director of Community Development; and Collin Okoniewski, Planning Operations Manager.

1. Call to Order

Chair Dhakal called the meeting of the Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

For the record, Chair Dhakal stated that five members were present for the meeting, which constituted a quorum.

2. Organizational Meeting Items

a. Election of Vice Chair

Chair Dhakal announced that the first item of business was for the election of a vice chair to serve as Chair of the committee in the absence of the Chair. Chair Dhakal called on Collin Okoniewski to provide a brief explanation of the committee election procedure.

Mr. Okoniewski provided a brief explanation.

Chair Dhakal opened the nomination period for Vice Chair of the Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

Committee Member Soma Ramesh nominated himself for the position of Vice Chair of the HDEIC.

No other nominations were received, and the nominations were closed. Prior to the vote Committee Member Ramesh provided brief comments to the committee.

February 2, 2023
HDEIC Meeting Minutes

Chair Dhakal called on the Clerk for voting on the nomination of Committee Member Ramesh for Vice Chair of the HDEIC. The vote passed 5-0-1 with Committee Member Ramesh abstaining and Committee Members Sigdel Parajuli and Hossain not yet present for the vote.

Committee Member Ramesh was named Vice Chair of the Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

3. Comments from the Audience

Chair Dhakal called on any members of the public that wanted to address the committee. The following individual addressed the committee during the public comment period:

- Bessy Denton, 496 Virginia Avenue, Herndon, VA 20170

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. October 20, 2022, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Draft Minutes**
- b. December 1, 2022, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Draft Minutes**

On motion by Committee Member Rodriguez, seconded by Vice Chair Ramesh, the minutes from the October 20, 2022, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting and the December 1, 2022, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting were approved by a 6-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Lacher, Rodriguez, Eisenfeld, Villegas, Vice Chair Ramesh, and Chair Dhakal voting “Aye.” Committee Members Sigdel Parajuli and Hossain were not yet present.

5. New Business

Committee Member Sigdel Parajuli and Hossain arrived at 7:15 p.m.

a. Committee Composition Discussion

The Committee held a brief discussion on its composition of members and provided the following recommendation to staff on filling the three current vacancies on the committee:

- Additional representation from the African American community
- The addition of one, preferable two youth members would be appreciated. Youth was defined by the committee as an individual under the age of 25.
- Evaluate the current committee composition and analyze whether the current membership can be shifted into different categories to provide a

February 2, 2023
HDEIC Meeting Minutes

broader way to incorporate new members (ie. A resident member may be able to fill a business owner vacancy, that would then allow the committee to fill the vacancy with a town resident, providing broader candidates)

b. Staff Presentation by Anne Curtis, Chief Communications Officer

Ms. Curtis gave a brief presentation to the committee. Following the presentation there was a brief question and answer period and discussion amongst the committee.

c. Staff Presentation by Cindy Roeder, Director of Parks and Recreation

Ms. Roeder gave a brief presentation to the committee. Following the presentation there was a brief question and answer period and discussion amongst the committee.

d. Action/Initiatives Roundtable

Mr. Okoniewski led the committee in a discussion on existing, current, and new initiatives they wanted added to the ongoing initiatives list.

Committee Members Hossain and Eisenfeld provided an update on their “safe space” initiative.

Chair Dhakal and Vice Chair Ramesh gave an update on their initiative surrounding STEM and the use of public-private partnerships to create opportunities for community youth.

The committee provided additional initiatives to be discussed at the upcoming meetings, including a request to invite Mr. Jay Garant, from the Fairfax County Public School system to address the committee on current programs and offerings for underserved students.

e. Meeting Schedule

The committee had a brief discussion to establish the meeting schedule for the next two meetings for the HDEIC. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 13th, 2023. The committee also committed to the date of Thursday, June 8th, 2023 for the subsequent meeting.

6. Comments

a. Comments from Staff

Ms. Gilleran reminded the committee that the survey for the Transit Related

February 2, 2023
HDEIC Meeting Minutes

Growth (TRG) Area is still active. She encouraged committee members to continue to reach out to their communities and networks to help facilitate further survey responses.

b. Comments from Committee Members

There were brief comments from committee members.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.



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