

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, April 13, 2023

The Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HDEIC) met in public session on Thursday, April 13, 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, Andrew Lacher, Alex Rodriguez, and Eileen Villegas.

Committee Member Rachel Eisenfeld arrived at 7:46 p.m.

Committee Members Arati Sigdel Parajuli and Sabrina Hossain were not yet present.

Staff Members present: Elizabeth Gilleran, Director of Community Development; and Aaron Zoellick, Clerk of Boards and Commissions.

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. Comments from the Audience

Chair Dhakal called on any members of the public that wanted to address the committee.

No comments were provided.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. February 2, 2023, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Draft Minutes

On motion by Committee Member Rodriguez, seconded by Vice Chair Ramesh, the minutes from the February 2, 2023, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting were approved by a 5-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Lacher, Rodriguez, Villegas, Vice Chair Ramesh, and Chair Dhakal voting “Aye.”

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4. New Business

a. HDEIC Awards Initiative

Councilmember Dhakal opened the floor to discussion on the initiative for HDEIC Awards brought forth by former HDEIC member, now councilmember, Keven LeBlanc.

Committee Members discussed whether the HDEIC would serve as the evaluation committee, whether to recommend one or three awards, and recommendations received each year for the volunteer award.

Committee Member Rodriguez made a motion to recommend to Town Council:

- 1) The establishment of three diversity awards to be presented to a person, business, and Town of Herndon employee;
- 2) The HDEIC will serve as the evaluation committee for nominations received; and,
- 3) Diversity awards will not be restricted to persons or businesses in the Town of Herndon but persons or businesses with an impact within the Town of Herndon.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Ramesh. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Lacher, Rodriguez, Villegas, Vice Chair Ramesh, and Chair Dhakal voting “Aye.”

b. Juneteenth Event Initiative

Councilmember Dhakal opened the floor to discussion on the initiative for a Juneteenth Event brought forth by former HDEIC member, now councilmember, Donielle Scherff.

Committee Members discussed the ambition of the initiative and the need for further clarification on HDEIC’s role in this initiative.

Committee Member Lacher made a motion to recommend to Town Council:

- 1) The HDEIC agrees with the value of this initiative, but further information is needed from Councilmember Scherff about what support HDEIC members can provide.

The motion was seconded by Committee Member Rodriguez. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Lacher, Rodriguez, Villegas, Vice Chair Ramesh, and Chair Dhakal voting “Aye.”

c. Revisions to June Meeting Schedule

Councilmember Dhakal called on Ms. Gilleran for an update on the HDEIC June meeting schedule.

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Ms. Gilleran sought the Committee Members' availability on June 15, 2023, to accommodate Jay Garant, a guest speaker from the Fairfax County Public Schools Ignite Partnerships program.

Committee Member Rachel Eisenfeld arrived at 7:46 p.m.

Committee Members agreed to tentatively schedule the next HDEIC meeting for June 15, 2023.

d. Action/Initiatives Roundtable (Updates and New Initiatives)

Councilmember Dhakal called on Ms. Gilleran to open the discussion on the ongoing list of HDEIC initiatives.

The first item of discussion was the proposed open mic event.

Committee members discussed scheduling an open mic event during an HDEIC meeting, using the open mic event as a listening opportunity, the need to consider civil wrongs not just civil rights, finding ways to advertise to people in the community, the planned satisfaction survey and business satisfaction survey.

Committee Member Lacher made a motion to recommend to Town Council:

- 1) The Town of Herndon consider adding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) components to the business satisfaction survey.

The motion was seconded by Committee Member Rodriguez. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Eisenfeld, Lacher, Rodriguez, Villegas, Vice Chair Ramesh, and Chair Dhakal voting "Aye."

The next item of discussion was inviting Dennis Holste, Economic Development Manager for the Town of Herndon, to a future HDEIC meeting.

The Committee Members agreed to invite Mr. Holste to the June 15, 2023, meeting.

The next item of discussion was inviting Melissa McKenna, President and CEO of Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, to a future HDEIC meeting.

The Committee Members agreed to invite Ms. McKenna to the June 15, 2023, meeting.

The next item of discussion was outreach to 501(c)(3)s.

The Committee Members agreed to table this discussion for a future meeting.

The next item of discussion was analyzing county reports to determine where extra efforts may be needed and identify other less evident forms of diversity.

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The Committee Members agreed to table this discussion for a future meeting.

The next item of discussion was creation of safe spaces.

Committee Members discussed the Maker Lab at the Herndon library, the Facebook page “Made in Herndon,” the Town of Herndon initiative to enhance and rejuvenate Town Hall Square, and the possibility for businesses to donate to the library.

Committee Member Eisenfeld departed the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

The next item of discussion was a community diverse dinner event.

Committee Member Eisenfeld re-joined the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

The Committee Members agreed to table this discussion for a future meeting.

The next item of discussion was creating a measurement tool for capturing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Town of Herndon.

Committee Members discussed the need for a qualitative measure, devising some kind of satisfaction survey for each event, and using safety as a measurement.

Committee Members agreed to table this discussion for a future meeting.

The next item of discussion was a possible skateboarding event.

Ms. Gilleran stated that she spoke with Roxanne Simkins, the Town of Herndon’s risk manager, and was told that the Town sponsoring a competitive skateboarding event was inadvisable but perhaps a professional skateboard could be invited to hold a demonstration.

Committee Member Rodriguez made a motion to recommend to Town Council:

- 1) Staff look into potential design of planning a skating event.

The motion was seconded by Committee Member Eisenfeld. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Eisenfeld, Lacher, Rodriguez, Villegas, Vice Chair Ramesh, and Chair Dhakal voting “Aye.”

The next item of discussion was diverse youth targeted research.

Committee Members agreed that this discussion item can be integrated into the discussion with Mr. Garant.

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5. Comments

a. Comments from Staff

No additional comments were provided.

b. Comments from Committee Members

Committee Member Lacher presented new initiatives.

- 1) Development of a One Herndon Policy modeled on the One Fairfax Policy.
- 2) Citizens review process for police misconduct.
- 3) Women only time for pool at Herndon Community Center to accommodate religious modesty concerns.

Chair Dhakal made a motion to recommend to Town Council:

- 1) Herndon Parks and Recreation Department look into the feasibility of establishing women's only hours at the community center, specifically the pool and fitness center, provided that the Town does the needed assessment, feasibility assessment, and legal assessment.

The motion was seconded by Committee Member Villegas. The motion was approved by a 5-1 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Eisenfeld, Lacher, Villegas, Vice Chair Ramesh, and Chair Dhakal voted "Aye." Committee Member Rodriguez voted "No."

Committee Member Eisenfeld stated that people have been put off by having the HDEIC meetings at the Police Department.

Ms. Gilleran stated that future work sessions will be taking place at the Town Council Chambers building. This may apply to future HDEIC meetings if space allows.

Councilmember Dhakal stated there has been discussion of holding meetings at the other side of the police department building.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



Collin J. Okoniewski

Planning Operations Manager