

**HERNDON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, September 14, 2023**

The Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HDEIC) met in public session on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were Vice Chair Soma Ramesh, Committee Members Andrew Lacher, Yelena Barth, Lorena Brady, Sabrina Hossain, Triston Chase O’Savio and Arati Sigdel Parajuli.

Chair Pradip Dhakal, Committee Members Rachel Eisenfeld, Alex Rodriguez, and Eileen Villegas were absent.

Staff Members present: Elizabeth Gilleran, Director of Community Development and Collin Okoniewski, Planning Operations Manager.

**1. Call to Order**

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

For the record, Vice Chair Ramesh stated that seven members were present for the meeting, which constituted a quorum.

Vice Chair Ramesh extended a welcome to the newest member of the committee, Yelena Barth. Committee Member Barth introduced herself to the committee and voiced her excitement to be a member.

**2. Comments from the Audience**

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

No comments were provided.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**a. April 13, 2023, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Draft Minutes**

On motion by Committee Member Barth, seconded by Committee Member Brady, the minutes from the April 12, 2023, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting were approved by a 7-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Brady, Barth, Hossain, Lacher, O’Savio, Sigdel Parajuli, Vice Chair Ramesh voting “Aye.”

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**b. June 15, 2023, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Draft Minutes**

On motion by Committee Member Hossein, seconded by Committee Member O’Savio, the minutes from the June 15, 2023, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting were approved by a 7-0 vote. The vote was: Committee Members Brady, Barth, Hossain, Lacher, O’Savio, Sigdel Parajuli, Vice Chair Ramesh voting “Aye.”

**4. New Business**

**a. Action/Initiatives Roundtable (Updates and New Initiatives)**

Vice Chair Ramesh provided updates on the mentoring initiative that he and Chair Dhakal are working on. Other members voiced their approval of the overall progress of this initiative and proposed other avenues that the program could be extended.

Committee Member Hossain requested that staff provide the HDEIC with an annual report document that outlines initiatives that they have heard, things that they have done, and other meeting information. Staff advised that they would put something put together for the first meeting of 2024, and make it an annual deliverable to the committee.

Committee Member Lacher provided an update on his meeting with Herndon Police Chief Deboard. Committee members requested that Chief Deboard attend a future meeting, possibly in January 2024.

Committee Member Hossain asked staff what involvement the committee could have in elections, specifically those coming in 2024 at the federal level. Members of the committee found that relaying election information as well as providing ballot translating services may assist minority members of the community. Staff advised that involvement in elections is not the easiest due to the role of the HDEIC as a committee, and election laws and policy. Staff advised that they would speak with Chair Dhakal and town administration in order to be able to address this topic further at a future meeting.

Committee Member Lacher proposed that the committee get behind the initiation of the creation of a formal policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Committee Member Lacher provided the committee information on the OneFairfax model and proposed it as a template for a Town of Herndon policy. Committee members asked questions on the model and requested staff circulate the documentation so that it may be added as an agenda item to the next meeting for discussion. Further, committee members encourage others to review the policy upon receipt so that the concepts could be discussed at the next meeting.

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**5. Comments**

**a. Comments from Staff**

Ms. Gilleran provided the committee with information regarding the re-write of the Town of Herndon Comprehensive Plan. She advised the committee of the process and where the committee may be needed to provide feedback on facets of the project.

Mr. Okoniewski was advised by the committee that a poll should be taken to decide on the date of the next meeting in November 2023.

**b. Comments from Committee Members**

There were no comments from committee members.

**6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.



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**Collin J. Okoniewski**

**Planning Operations Manager**