

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
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May 13, 2021
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA TEAMS
7 PM

Meeting Minutes

- I. Chair Helen Connolly called the meeting to order. Members present included Jose Quinonez, Steven Krieger, Walter Sergeant, Shawn Pierce, Carole Lieber, Roland Watkins, Susie Lee, Kiley Tibbetts, Whytni Kernodle, and Sukari Pinnock-Fitts. Executive Director Gurjit Chima and Anna Maynard were present from the Office of Human Rights. Chief Race and Equity Officer Samia Byrd was also present.
- II. The Chair introduced Chief Race and Equity Officer, Samia Byrd.
- III. Samia Byrd shared origins of the positions, her position, framework for equity work, started in the county as a planner, background in city planning, with county for 10 years, gravitated to planning because wanted to build bridges, make communities better for people of color and contribute to places they live which helps people where they live, discussed GARE co-hort and board equity resolution. Working on equity since 2018. Leading work on systemic changes enterprise wide. Defined racial equity, moving beyond service based approach to changing policies, structures. About 23 percent of Arlington residents are residents, went through demographics of wages compared to white people and residential segregation. Discussed disparities regarding education, rent, pollution and income. We are race explicit but not race exclusive because we want to improve everyone's lives through our racial equity efforts.
- IV. There was no public comment. Discussed "Realizing Arlington's Commitment to Racial Equity," success regardless of race, working on normalizing work through facilitated conversations throughout community and county. Heard from community about "Arlington Way" lacks diversity and transparency, lack of affordable housing and exclusionary family housing, lack of educational resources, and language barriers. Discussed county racial equity course for employees and racial equity dashboard. Discussed funding for racial equity to expand training and a position to support her. Shared that funding for a consultant on budget equity is in budget. Mr. Pierce asked if the goals are achievable and Ms. Byrd said yes even if incremental but that we should not back away from racial equity challenges.
- V. The Chair asked Ms. Byrd how community feedback was integrated into the work and how the commission can support the county's racial equity work. Ms. Byrd shared that the county is engaging the community more and going out to residents. Ms. Byrd shared that she has seen county staff increasingly apply the racial equity lens. The Chair asked if the community partners could be expanded and Ms. Byrd said it would be. The Chair offered to assist with the commission's platform during its events. Ms. Pinnock-Fitts asked how many training hours train the trainers get before they do community training. Ms. Byrd stated that Challenging Racism did the community work after a "couple of months" of preparation. Ms. Byrd did not

know the number of hours. Ms. Pinnock-Fitts asked how trainers are evaluated and when they Challenging Racism work would start again. Ms. Byrd did not know when the work would start again and shared that an evaluation form was sent to Challenging Racism to provide the feedback they received. Mr. Pierce asked if the Equality Workforce Document a public report the commission could ask. Ms. Byrd stated that the report is on the county's website. R. Quinonez asked if Ms. Byrd if she's meeting with Destination 2027 and if she intended to meet with more communities of color. Ms. Lieber asked what's been done for people with disabilities to which Ms. Byrd shared that the issue had not been raised with her in terms of intersectionality between race and disabilities although she was aware of the existence of an overlap. Ms. Byrd invited Ms. Lieber to connect her to anyone in the community with whom she could discuss those concerns in more detail. Ms. Lieber indicated that she looked forward to working with Ms. Byrd on this.

- VI. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- VII. The Chair asked if any commissioner would help put into writing a conflicts of interest policy for the commission to which Carole Lieber volunteer.
- VIII. The Chair discussed the Police Practices Group (PPG) work and asked Whytni to discuss her efforts in that area. The Chair shared that the PPG is looking at issues around policing, including the use of a bomb squad truck which has shown up in low crime communities. Ms. Pinnock-Fitts expressed that the truck causes intimidation when it shows up in areas of the community. Ms. Whytni discussed the overpolicing of communities in Arlington but that the bomb truck incident did not come up in her discussions. Ms. Lieber shared information about an article on how Arlington needs to look at Alexandria for what actions to take. Ms. Lieber shared that the annual VA Human Rights Conference will focus on what jurisdictions are doing in their reviews of policing. Mr. Pierce shared that he felt that a member of the HRC should be on the PPG commission and asked if Whytni serving in that capacity. Whytni mentioned that she could but also recommended Steve Krieger to serve in that role. Ms. Pinnock-Fitts stated that the County Manager shared that we need to change the culture of calling the police for everything and how people could call some mental health hotline. Ms. Pinnock-Fitts asked Ms. Kernodle if she could explain that. Mr. Quinonez shared a community police program that works well on Columbia Pike and suggested perhaps that could be expanded after sharing that some residents are reluctant to contact the police.
- IX. No public comments.
- X. The Executive Director shared that the EEO policy would be shared next month as she needed to compare for consistency with the updates to the A.R., explaining the purpose of the two documents.
- XI. There were no comments on the statistical report.
- XII. There were no extensions.
- XIII. Mr. Quinonez shared that the EEO Standing Committee would hold its first meeting on May 26.
- XIV. Mr. Tibbets discussed a document he shared with commissions which recommended two motions be made including adding language regarding gender identity to the procurement language and

- XV. Adjust purchasing resolution to add gender identity to protected category to procurement policy and second motion to have board to direct County Manager to implement youth anti-bullying policy covering parks, libraries, etc.

Amendment to procurement policy moved by Sukari as laid out in memo, Roland seconded. Passed unanimously.

Amendment to present bullying policy as drafted in Kiley's memo moved by Kiley, seconded by Pinnock-Fitts.

- XVI. Steven Krieger had no updates on the Education Task Force. I shared that advertising for Education outreach event in July needed 3 weeks in advance or as soon as possible.
- XVII. The Chair shared that the outreach event happening in July, need to have it advertised.
- XVIII. Mr. Watkins moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Pinnock-Fitts. The motion passed unanimously.