

Recap of the Hillsborough County Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) Meeting January 11, 2017

January 11, 2017 Hillsborough County Diversity Advisory Council meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair Ortiz. Members present: Chair Ortiz, Letitia Haynes, Terry Kemple, Raed Khawaja, Virgil Perry, Patti Sanchez, Satish Sharma, Lynnette Stine, Francis Joseph, and Robert Chen. Members absent: Gamal Gasser (Notified), Tonni Bacoat-Jones (Notified), Jennifer Shiver (Did not Notify), James Tokley (Did not Notify), Kamal Patel (Did not Notify), Roxanne Bartley (Notified), Vice-Chair Howell (Notified), Kate Shaw (Did not Notify), Leon Herndon (Notified). There was not a quorum present. Staff present: Albert Coleman, EOA/Office of Community Affairs, Tony Morejon from the Office of Community Affairs, Carmen LoBue from the Office of Community Affairs, and Zuleyka Carbajal from the Equal Opportunity Administrator's Office.

Public Comment: Jennifer Yeagly, Executive Director of Community Tampa Bay, which is an anti-discrimination organization that works with both youth and adults, is asking Hillsborough County to consider passing an ordinance to protect marginalized and historically oppressed communities in our county. David McCallister spoke regarding the currently oppressed and marginalized people which are the Indigenous Southern Americans, symbols and culture have been attacked. Mr. McCallister also commented that sanctuary county is inappropriate because the Federal Government has determined that sanctuary status is illegal. Nancy Palacios, stated that she is a beneficiary of DACA (Differed Action for Childhood Arrivals) and is an organizer of Faith in Florida, she would like for the County to consider making Tampa a sanctuary county. Maria Chapa spoke regarding civil liberties, civil rights and for Hillsborough County to be an inclusive county. Cirenio Cervantes is requesting that Hillsborough County make the county a sanctuary city.

Chair Ortiz commented that there was lack of quorum that ten members were present. He also noted that Lisa Demmi had resigned from the DAC.

Old Business:

Approval of December 7, 2016 Meeting Recap: Recap could not be voted on due to lack of quorum.

Old Business:

Marketing Sub-Committee Report: Mr. Kemple stated that they have not met and there was nothing to report. Chair Ortiz requested that something be brought to the next month's regular meeting.

Revised Strategic Plan-Timeline: Chair Ortiz stated there is no timeline developed, the Sub-Committees will have to meet first and report to the Chair for including updates in the timeline.

Mr. Kemple spoke regarding next agenda item, Hillsborough County as a Sanctuary County Discussion, and noted that for an item to be on the agenda it has to be discussed and approved by the majority at a prior meeting, or be an emergency or special circumstance. Mr. Kemple felt that this item should be stricken from the January agenda.

Mr. Joseph made a motion that this item, Hillsborough County as a Sanctuary County Discussion, be kept on the agenda to discuss at the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Chen. Mr. Kemple noted that it was not discussed at the last meeting. There was discussion on the DAC's role as a Council. Mr. Kemple and Mr. Perry were opposed to the motion, all others present voted in favor. Motion carried 8-2.

Due to no quorum: This motion was not valid.

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New Business:

Hillsborough as a Sanctuary County Discussion: Chair Ortiz started the discussion regarding Hillsborough County becoming a sanctuary county and recommending it to the BOCC.

Mr. Kemple stated that there was a public notification that was improperly made and that is why there was so many people in attendance. If it wasn't on the notification, they wouldn't be there.

Mr. Joseph stated that in order for the DAC to make an informed decision or recommendation, the DAC has to be informed on what is being recommended.

Mr. Kemple suggested that if the DAC wants to be informed, they should meet with the people that have the concern. He stated that the DAC would be telling the BOCC to defy Federal Law.

Chair Ortiz read out the definition of sanctuary city or county, it is a city that has adopted a policy of protecting undocumented immigrants by not prosecuting them solely on violating Federal Immigration Law, in the country in which they are now living illegally.

Mr. Kemple stated that what a sanctuary city doesn't do is protect peoples' safety, rights, and concerns of people that are here legally. Mr. Kemple also stated that the BOCC cannot tell the Hillsborough County Sheriff that he cannot enforce a law, that's the Sheriff's responsibility.

Ms. Haynes inquired what the nearest sanctuary county or city is to Hillsborough County? Mr. Khawaja responded that it is Broward County.

Chair Ortiz noted that the discussion alone isn't going to lead to a recommendation and for the BOCC to violate Federal Law, that there could still be a conversation regarding the issue.

There was discussion on what the current administration is doing regarding deportation and what the new administration will be doing.

Chair Ortiz requested that the word undocumented be used instead of the word illegal.

Mr. Khawaja suggested that we should take this concern of our citizens and see what can be offered.

Chair Ortiz stated that he was going to give a real world example and discussed if the local law enforcement is now deputized as immigration officers as well, the families that are here undocumented, if they have contact with law enforcement, they are in danger of being deported. So, if they are robbed, they will not call the police, so they are further being victimized as residents of Hillsborough County.

Chair Ortiz read the Ordinance from San Francisco for Sanctuary City. Mr. Chen inquired what the current status is in Hillsborough County for people that are undocumented and their concerns now versus two years ago. Chair Ortiz responded that they are still the same concerns from before Trump was elected.

Mr. Perry stated that he didn't vote to support the discussion because there wasn't a quorum. He felt that the balance of education and infirmity from the community was off. There needs to be more education on the subject and hearing out the community.

Mr. Chen requested if Ms. Palacios could come up and give some examples of what the community feels or has gone through.

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Ms. Palacios stated that she has been in Hillsborough County for 21 years. She has grown up in this County as an undocumented woman and her parents are also undocumented, but also has family members who are citizens. She stated that there has been fear of going up to a police officer. If there wasn't a fear of going up to the police, the police wouldn't have to build those bridges. She lives in an area that has a lot of undocumented people. There has been a fear, but she has seen the fear escalate since this election season.

Kids are being diagnosed with depression because of fear and don't want to go to school over being afraid that their parents are not going to be home when they get home from school. She said that people fear having to drive to work because of fear of getting pulled over. These people have never committed a crime, paid their taxes, served and have been good residents of this county. She says that the current President has deported over two million people, but they have not all been criminals. She said peoples' place have been raided, they have been detained and are sitting in detention centers for long periods of time that have not seen a judge. She said that the incoming administration is not coming in with a plan, that DACA is going to be repealed and people are going to be rounded up. She stated that having police enforce immigration is taking away tax payers' dollars that can go to handle other crimes committed. She felt that it's not the County's job to be processing people for deportation and that tax dollars should not be going to that.

Mr. Chen stated that this issue has been going on for a while, not just now.

Chair Ortiz stated that bringing a recommendation to the BOCC doesn't guarantee anything, but that there should be a conversation and if there was a majority vote that the recommendation should be brought to the BOCC, which he would be the one to do.

Mr. Kemple suggested that the DAC has to be careful with whatever it takes to the BOCC.

Chair Ortiz stated that if the DAC makes recommendations to the BOCC, information needs to be provided to them with suggestions and he needs to be prepared before making any recommendations.

Mr. Perry inquired if the DAC could invite someone from law enforcement to speak. Chair Ortiz responded that he does know someone in law enforcement that he could reach out to.

Mr. Sharma suggested possibly doing a survey. Chair Ortiz responded that it would be good to do a survey.

Mr. Coleman advised having organizations coming to speak. Chair Ortiz stated not only people that are for, but for also people that are against.

Interact Hillsborough - April 15, 2017: Chair Ortiz wants to form a sub-committee to make sure everything gets done. Mr. Sharma, Ms. Stine and Chair Ortiz will be part of that sub-committee and absent members will also be notified. Chair Ortiz informed the members that more information will be provided at next month's meeting, and also what categories will be represented.

Chair Ortiz stated since there was no quorum the December 2016 meeting minutes would have to be approved later.

Announcements & Council Member Reports

Mr. Chen announced that January 28th is Chinese New Year, on January 14th there is a function at Blake High School with Chinese performers. Performers will also be performing on January 28th at Hard Rock Hotel. On February 12th the City of Largo will have a celebration.

Mr. Sharma announced that Indian Republic Day will be celebrated on January 29, 2017.

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Mr. Kemple passed out a handout regarding how the categories of the DAC were determined. He provided the Census data for Hillsborough County. He stated that a majority of the categories did not come from the Census.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Next Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.