

Recap of the Hillsborough County Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) Meeting March 7, 2018

March 7, 2018 Hillsborough County Diversity Advisory Council meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Perry. Members present: Chair Perry, Vice Chair Patel, Reham Fared, Lynnette Stine, Ann Nguyen, David McCallister, Raed Khawaja, Edelyn Verona, Yvette Jones, Marta Pearson, and Conchita Burpee. Members absent: Terry Kemple (Notified), Jennifer Shiver (Notified), Alvin Jin (Notified), Xolani Kacela (Did not Notify), Sean Colin (Notified), Jermaine White (Notified), and Patti Sanchez (Notified and resigned.) There was a quorum present. Staff present: Tony Morejon, Office of Community Affairs, Albert Coleman, EOA/Office of Community Affairs, and Carmen LoBue, ADA officer/ Office of Community Affairs.

Public Comment: Three visitors provided public comment: First, Ms. Jenna Bernstein introduced herself as representative of her Jewish Confederate ancestors and spoke about different aspects of her life and travels. She expressed frustration about social media postings that she considered divisive and pursued an open dialogue without the labeling of white supremacist. She blamed racism and antisemitism as the reason behind removal of war memorials and vandalism of statues. Ms. Bernstein explained how in occasions she wears a band similar to the one the Nazis made Jews wear to differentiate herself in groups and it's mistaken for a swastika; and how she's looked upon as a terrorist speaking Arabic when she speaks in Hebrew. She encouraged all to embrace understanding and love for one another. Second, Mr. H. K. Edgerton, president of Southern heritage 411, talked about guns and wished he had been present to discuss issues as mentioned by Ms. Bernstein. He spoke against the proposed ban of assault weapons. As a firm believer of his second amendment constitutional rights, he was in hope that the DAC will assist the BOCC in defining what assault weapons means and recommend the BOCC to address mental health issues. Third, Mr. Phil Walters defined diversity as showing a great deal of variety and difference. He felt compelled to emphasize that a confederate flag is not the definition of bigotry and confederate symbols are continuously misused. He is saddened by the stereotype and ignorance that is propagated and said that Confederate Heritage is about a fight for freedom not slavery. He asked the council to support a Confederate Heritage Month Proclamation and advised them to attend BOCC meetings at least once a month and be proactive as a diverse group.

Chair Perry thanked the visitors and provided assurance that the council's commitment is for a more inclusive approach.

Approval of February 7, 2018 Meeting Recap: A motion was made by Mr. Khawaja to approve February 7, 2018 meeting recap. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stine. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

New Business:

Recap of DAC Presentation to BOCC: Chair Perry asked staff to post the new Strategic Plan on the DAC webpage and requested a video clip of his February 21 presentation to the BOCC to be shared with council members. He thanked Mr. McCallister for attending the BOCC meeting as a DAC representative. The BOCC was provided a copy of the plan in advance of the public meeting. He emphasized the DAC commitment in their rebranding process to be inclusive and representative of all of Hillsborough County. The presentation was received appropriately and the BOCC advised the council to not wait for quarterly meetings to address issues as they rise in the community. He was advised to ensure the council implements the mission and vision that created the council. He encouraged members to do public outreach and invite community leaders to attend council meetings.

Chair Perry reported his interview by Alvin McCray who questioned whether the DAC was a confederate organization. Mr. Perry explained to the reporter that the DAC was not a confederate organization but instead is an inclusive organization that represents different people. However, he appreciates the exposure DAC is having and asked for council's feedback on what issues DAC should consider such as DACA or Haiti issues as introduced by various visiting guests in public comment. Some members expressed concern on the question of confederacy relative to DAC and the message the public receives. After an intense discussion on the subject, the Chair invited

Recap of the Hillsborough County Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) Meeting March 7, 2018

all councilmembers to proactively have their communities represented at DAC meetings and fill the room with guests to implement their strategic plan and avoid the risk of one ideology within the council. Mr. McCallister congratulated Chair Perry for a great presentation to the BOCC as mandated by the council. Members agreed that their visibility in the various communities and events it's crucial in implementing their plan and they committed to strengthen their public outreach efforts. Mr. Morejon congratulated the council on their strategic plan product and praised the Chair and subcommittee for the plan's updates and presentation. Councilmember Fared advised the council on implementation strategies inclusive of visibility, and building relationships with different types of media to invite public engagement. Councilmember Stine encouraged members to use the event calendar and proactively participate in diverse events. Councilmember Pearson emphasized that she will not participate in Confederate efforts. Councilmember McCallister clarified that he represents Indigenous Southern Americans and not the misnomer Confederacy. To avoid confusion and/or misrepresentation, Vice Chair Patel suggested to exclude discussion on organizations that are not representative of the council.

Update on One Hillsborough Diversity Fest: Ms. Stine lead the discussion on the subcommittee event planning for the One Hillsborough Diversity Fest on Saturday, April 14, 2018 from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. at Joe Chillura Courthouse Square. Admission is free with food trucks, entertainment and tables representing different communities. Displays will not allow for selling of food. Samples should be free. Pierce parking garage will be free. For information go to: Hcflgov.net/DiversityAdvisoryCouncil and Onehillsborough@gmail.com. Sign in sheet was passed around for councilmember's volunteer hours. From 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. and 12 P.M. to 4 P.M. Councilmembers were directed to find as many volunteers as possible. Volunteers and councilmembers will receive a T-shirt to wear at the event. Irish and Flamenco dancers have been secured. 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. is the performance time. Marion Nunez from The Tampa Native show will be the Emcee. She encouraged the dissemination of the Safe the Date. Deadline for entertainment sign-up is March 16th. DAC sign and tent location will be determined in advance of setup. She went over the tentative program. Ms. Nguyen went over the availability of food trucks. The subcommittee meets every Thursday at 6 P.M. Ms. LoBue advised members to pre approve the giveaways and displays as this is a family event and reminded the council to promote the DAC vacancies and recruit applicants for four categories: LGBT, African American, Indian Asian and Native American. Wednesday, March 14 is the deadline to apply. Mr. Morejon recommended having one volunteer coordinator. Staff was asked to provide services for a Facebook page to promote DAC event and secure with DAC funding. Councilmember Stine made a motion to change the One Hillsborough Diversity Fest on Saturday, April 14, 2018 time to 11 A.M. to 3 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Fared. ***Motion carried unanimously.*** Staff will provide name badges for members who need it.

Councilmember McCallister proposed DAC community outreach in public libraries as inspired by former BOCC Commissioner Beckner. To allocate appropriate time for issue discussion, Chair Perry suggested adding the issue to the next DAC meeting agenda. Mr. Morejon explained that the mission for DAC to conduct business is during monthly DAC meetings.

Chair Perry asked councilmembers to send information (photos, name and date) about attended community events to Councilmember Reham for DAC records.

Voting on 2nd Annual Multicultural Family Day: The council voted to participate in the Multicultural family day in May 19th. Handouts were distributed.

Announcement: Councilmember Nguyen announced the Friday, April 27 at 6 P.M. National Association of Asian American Professionals event.

Councilmember McCallister announced the National Irish Heritage Month Parade in Ybor City on Saturday, March 17th.

Recap of the Hillsborough County Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) Meeting March 7, 2018

Councilmember Reham mentioned the International Women's Day on Thursday, March 8th and encouraged everyone to wear purple in support. Also, as an explanation to a public comment previously made, she wanted on record for everyone to understand that speaking Arabic does not mean that one is a terrorist. She said that connotation is not true. Also, she wished Chair Perry a Happy Birthday!

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Next Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at 6:30 p.m.