

Town of Fairfax
Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee (RESJ)
Regular Meeting
Via teleconference due to COVID-19
Thursday, April 1, 2021

Facilitator Rodriguez called the Regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order/Roll Call:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Veronica Geretz
Tayu Neogy
Griselda Hernandez
Serena Campbell
Alexandra Rosem
Lisel Blash
Layli Shirani
Sophia Martin
Bruce Ackerman (Councilmember)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Stephanie Hellman (Councilmember)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Garrett Toy, Town Manager
Anne Mannes, Staff member
Lisa Jimenez, Facilitator

Approval of Agenda and Affidavit of Posting

M/s, Geretz/Campbell, to approve the agenda and Affidavit of posting.

Ayes: All

Absent: Hellman

Regular Agenda

1. Conduct the meeting of the RESJ Committee to discuss/consider the following general topics and take action as appropriate:

A. Opening

- Land Acknowledgement
- Assign meeting roles

Committee member Neogy volunteered to be the timekeeper and Committee member Hernandez volunteered to be the process observer.

B. Transition of Youth to Adult RESJ Membership

- Report out of City Attorney guidance regarding youth membership
- Discuss/consider making Sophia non-youth member

Committee member Ackerman reported California law prohibits a youth member from being an official voting member on a committee. Sophia is now 18 years of age and the Town Council can appoint her to be a full member.

Facilitator Jimenez opened the meeting to public comments.

There were no comments.

Facilitator Jimenez closed the meeting to public comments

M/s, Geretz/Neogy, to recommend to the Town Council to make Sophia Martin a full voting member.

Ayes: All

Absent: Hellman

C. RESJ reflection on norms and moving forward

- Reflections from last meeting
- Revisit purpose and facilitator recommendations to align RESJ to purpose
- Opportunities for relationship building and learning

Facilitator Jimenez gave a PowerPoint presentation. She wanted to discuss how oppression and systemic racism was playing out on RESJ. She had some recommendations including electing a non-white chair, implementing non-white subcommittee leadership, and starting discussions by non-white members first.

The Committee discussed the changes made at the PPPSA Committee, creating a revised set of norms, and how to get more members of color on the committee.

D. RESJ Chair

- Discuss changing RESJ Chair to non-white RESJ membership
- Consider election of new RESJ Chair

Facilitator Jimenez gave a report.

Facilitator Jimenez opened the meeting to public comments.

Debra (Dee Lee) Benson noted the public comment period should come before the final vote.

Patrece Bryan stated the meeting is being run in an organized and structured fashion.

John Ramaides and Richard Applebaum supported Committee member Rosem as Chair.

Willow and Naomi supported a BIPOC member as Chair.

Facilitator Jimenez closed the meeting to public comments.

M/s, Ackerman/Geretz, to elect Committee member Rosem as Chair and that she continue to Chair the PPPSA.

Ayes: All

Absent: Hellman

E. Budget Preview

- Current RESJ budget update
- Parameters of the budget funding for RESJ
- GARE

Facilitator Jimenez presented a report and a PowerPoint presentation.

Committee member Ackerman discussed the budget process and the cost of the facilitator.

The Committee discussed the need for a facilitator.

F. Subcommittee reports

- Policing

Committee member Rosem gave a report on recent PPPSA activities.

- Ad Hoc Mission and Vision

Committee member Geretz stated they met yesterday and she gave an update.

- Community Education

Committee member Campbell stated they met twice since the last RESJ meeting. She gave an update.

- Policy

Committee member Shirani stated they met once and came up with a list of things to work on.

G. Police Chief Selection Community Panel

- TC report out on the interview process

Committee member Ackerman gave a report and answered questions from the Committee.

- Consider appointing one RESJ member and one PPPSA member

Committee member Ackerman gave a report and answered questions from the Committee.

Facilitator Jimenez opened the meeting to public comments.

Daria stated the women of color should decide based on who is drawn to the task.

Joe McGarry stated the survey is out and was in the Town Newsletter and on the Town Website.

Debra (Dee Lee) Benson asked the Committee to listen to all voices. She supported Interim Chief Rico Tabaranza as the new Police Chief.

Facilitator Jimenez closed the meeting to public comments.

Town Manager Toy discussed the on-line survey and the interview process.

M/s, Hernandez/Blash, to elect Committee member Campbell and Rosem to serve on the Selection Committee Panel with members Neogy and Geretz to serve as backups.

Ayes: All

Absent: Hellman

H. Public Comment: Items on the agenda

Facilitator Jimenez opened the meeting to public comments.

Debra (Dee Lee) Benson stated the removal of the red-lining clause from deeds could serve to raise community consciousness. She was concerned that the Facilitator Budget Line Item is overspent by 27% over the contract. The facilitator position was supposed to be temporary.

Richard Applebaum stated the facilitator position should be better managed moving forward.

John Ramaides stated the facilitator seems to be charging \$345 per hour. Payment should be contingent on meeting certain goals.

Facilitator Jimenez closed the meeting to public comments.

I. Public Comments: Items not on the agenda

Facilitator Jimenez opened the meeting to public comments.

Debra (Dee Lee) Benson stated the committee does not seem open to any voices of dissent. She does not believe Fairfax is a racist Town.

Richard Applebaum stated there is racism in Fairfax.

Willow stated this work requires a different level of support and facilitation.

John Ramaides asked the committee to distinguish between a "racist town" and people who are racist. Making generalizations is not a good idea. He asked for a definition of "white".

Facilitator Jimenez closed the meeting to public comments.

Committee members responded to some of the public comments.

J. Next Meeting

- Next steps review

Staff member Mannes read the next steps: 1) Chair for PPPSA; 2) Affinity groups; 3) Recommendation to Town Council about facilitator; 4) Discussion of racial covenant forms; 5) Report on date of Police Chief interview; 6) Further guidance on budget; 7) Additions to the Town survey; 8) New application.

- Items for next meeting
- Process Observation report out.
- Appreciations

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.