



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

August 5, 2020

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Receive summary of Council actions to form the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) and provide additional policy direction on any outstanding issues such as number and composition of members.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction to staff on the RESJ.

BACKGROUND

At its special July 15th meeting, the Council convened a community listening session and received comments from over xx attendees regarding the proposed RESJ, police services/budget, and other related issues.

After the community listening session, the Council took the following actions:

- Approved the formation of a Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee (Committee).
- Approved the concept of the Racial Equity and Inclusion/Social Justice Committee (RESJ) forming a Subcommittee to discuss Police Practices and Public Safety Budget/Service Alternatives.
- Assigned Vice-Mayor Ackerman and Councilmember Hellman to the Committee
- Directed staff to move forward with the regular application and interview process since that will take some time. Applications were made available July 17th and the deadline is 5:00pm on August 5th with interviews scheduled for an August 12th Special Council meeting. Depending on the number of applications received, appointments to the Committee by the Council would either occur on August 12th or at the September 2nd regular meeting. For example, if the Council only receives 10 applications, it may want to consider making appointments on August 12th. However, if the Council receives 20+ applications, it may want to take more time to consider the interviews and make the appointments at its September meeting.

- Decided that Committee members can be residents, business employees/owners, and/or own a business in town with a commercial location.
- Agreed to retain a professional facilitator to assist the committee and allocate staff resources to assist the committee.

Please note the Committee and the Police subcommittee is subject to the Brown Act, which requires the meetings to be open and properly noticed to the public.

DISCUSSION

At the July 15th Council meeting, staff reported we would return with a resolution to formally create the Committee at the Council's August meeting. This would allow time for staff to incorporate the Council's direction into the resolution. However, the Council did not provide direction on three key issues identified below.

Number of Committee Members

The Councilmembers only offered their preliminary comments regarding the number of Committee members, but did not settle on a number. The range discussed was between 8-12 members including the two Councilmembers. Prior to making Committee appointments, the Council will want to establish the number of members. However, the Council could wait until August 12th meeting to make that decision.

Composition of the Committee

The Council also discussed designating member categories such as youth, senior, business, at-large, and/or black, indigenous, persons of color (BIPOC), but did not establish categories or the minimum number for each category. The Council did indicate that it preferred that a majority of the Committee members to be BIPOC. Staff did create these categories on the application for people to voluntarily select. The Town Attorney clarified that the Committee may have youth members (under 18), but they must be non-voting members.

Again, the Council may want to decide on these categories and the minimum number of each category if it would be helpful for the Council in the appointment process. On the other hand, the Council could just leave it up to individual Councilmembers to decide which applicants he/she wants to vote regardless of the categories.

Mission/Purpose of the Committee

With regard to the purpose/mission of the subcommittee and its goals/objectives, Councilmembers provided preliminary comments. Staff suggested that the Council continue the discussion to another meeting after the Council has had time to digest the comments received at the Community Listening Session.

One option available to the Council is to let the Committee recommend to the Council its purpose/mission statement, goals/objectives, and workplan after it has had an opportunity hold a few meetings with its facilitator.

Based on the Council direction, staff would return on August 12th or September 2nd with a resolution forming the Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT

To be determined