



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

April 7, 2021

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Appoint the youth RESJ member as a regular Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) committee member

RECOMMENDATION

Appoint the youth member, Sophia Martin, as a regular RESJ committee member.

BACKGROUND

In August 2020, the Council interviewed applicants for the Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee (RESJ). In September 2020, the Council appointed members to the RESJ. The composition of the RESJ consisted of two (2) Councilmembers, Mayor Ackerman and Vice-Mayor Hellman; eleven (11) members who reside within the 94930-zip code area, or who work in or own a commercial storefront business in downtown Fairfax; and up to two (2) youth members. The RESJ currently has five vacancies: four regular and one youth member.

At its February 2021 meeting, the RESJ discussed its desire for developing its own application, interview, selection, and appointment process for filling vacancies on the RESJ. While the RESJ has yet to work out the specific details of its own process, the RESJ is requesting the Council authorize the RESJ, in-lieu of the Council, to make appointments to fill vacancies. However, the composition of the RESJ would remain the same (i.e., number of members) and any modifications would require prior Council approval.

DISCUSSION

At its March 17th meeting to consider this RESJ request, staff reported that only the Council can appoint members to committees subject to the Brown Act. However, the Council has the flexibility to delegate the application and interview process to the RESJ. The Council discussed the following options: 1) allow the RESJ to present a slate of candidates for the vacancies for Council consideration or 2) request the RESJ to provide a "short list" of applicants for the Council to consider for the vacancies. In both options, the RESJ would create the application and conduct the interviews of the applicants. Under Option #1, the RESJ would be recommending the same number of applicants as there are vacancies. Under Option #2, the RESJ would be recommending at least one more applicant than there are vacancies for the Council to consider. Presumably under Option #2, the Council would conduct its own interviews prior to making any appointments.

After a lengthy discussion, the Council requested the Mayor and Vice-Mayor to discuss these two options with the RESJ and to report back to the Council with the RESJ's preference. At its April 6th meeting, the RESJ received a report on the matter and will be discussing the options at a future RESJ meeting. However, the RESJ did indicate it would like to work on the application process.

In the meantime, the RESJ is requesting the Council appoint Sophia Martin, who is a RESJ youth member, to be a regular RESJ committee member. Ms. Martin just turned 18 and the RESJ would like her to be a regular voting member.

FISCAL IMPACT

n/a