



HERNDON HERNDON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 15, 2024

1. Call to Order

The Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HDEIC) met in public session on Thursday, November 2, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were: Chair Pradip Dhakal, and committee members Andrew Lacher, Arati Sigdel, Eileen Villegas, Sabrina Hossain, Triston Chase O'Savio, Lorena Brady and Yelena Barth. Committee members Alex Rodriguez and Vice Chair Soma Ramesh were absent.

Staff members in attendance were: Elizabeth Gilleran, Director of Community Development, and Collin Okoniewski, Planning Operations Manager.

Chair Dhakal called the February 15, 2024, Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee meeting to order at 7:00 PM

For the record, Chair Dhakal stated that eight members were present for the meeting, which constituted a quorum.

2. Comments from the Audience

Chair Dhakal called on any members of the public who wanted to address the committee. No comments were provided.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. November 2, 2023, HDEIC Meeting Minutes

Committee Member Hossain moved to approve the November 2, 2023, HDEIC Meeting Minutes, as presented.

Motion seconded by Committee Member Sigdel.

The question was called on the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote. The vote was: Committee Member(s) Barth, Brady, Hossain, Lacher, O'Savio, Sigdel, Villegas, and Chair Dhakal voting "Aye."

4. Regular Business

a. Review of the HDEIC Mission & New Standard Operating Procedures for Ad Hoc Committees

Chair Dhakal called on Lisa Gilleran for a staff presentation to review the HDEIC mission and new standard operating procedures for ad hoc committees.

Ms. Gilleran delivered the presentation and took questions from the committee.

Committee Member Brady asked staff about the capabilities of interpretation services at future meetings. Ms. Gilleran advised that currently, interpretation is only available for Town Council meetings.

Committee members asked staff questions concerning public comments from cultural groups and how they may be able to address the committee if there are language issues. Staff responded that if staff is made aware ahead of the meeting, staff can attempt to make arrangements for informal translation services by other staff members, but there is no protocol for this currently.

b. Review of HDEIC Annual Report

Chair Dhakal called on Collin Okoniewski for a staff presentation to review the HDEIC Annual Report

Mr. Okoniewski delivered the presentation and there were no follow up comments by the committee.

c. "Herndon Together" Proposed Resolution

Chair Dhakal called on Committee Member Lacher to present his draft resolution for initiating a "Herndon Together" policy, a modified version of the One Fairfax policy.

Committee Member Lacher presented his resolution and explained his proposal.

Committee Member Lacher stated that the resolution is not the policy, it is just a proposal that is hopefully moved to the Town Council level by recommendation by the HDEIC.

Committee Member took questions from the committee.

Committee Member Hossain asked for a further explanation of the process pending a recommendation from the HDEIC. Committee Member and Chair Dhakal provided a more complete explanation of how this recommendation would move through the council and be directed to the staff from the council for

additional research and possible drafting of policy.

Committee Member Brady asked that we look to insert language recognizing equity, and add specific language that "inclusion cannot be achieved without respecting basic human rights". Committee Member Brady also requested that the language in the resolution be changed to reflect the term "non-native English speakers" instead of "English as a second language".

Committee members also had a brief discussion surrounding the naming of the policy and the majority stated that they liked "One Herndon" to make a connection to the "One Fairfax" policy done by Fairfax County.

Committee Member Lacher moved to recommend the resolution to and challenge the Town Council to include the HDEIC in their construction of a OneHerndon policy in accordance with the draft resolution.

Motion seconded by Chair Dhakal.

The question was called on the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote. The vote was: Committee Member(s) Barth, Brady, Hossain, Lacher, O'Savio, Sigdel, Villegas, and Chair Dhakal voting "Aye."

d. Action/Initiatives Roundtable (Updates and New Initiatives)

Chair Dhakal called on Collin Okoniewski to lead the discussion on current actions and initiatives previously discussed by the HDEIC.

Mr. Okoniewski reviewed the existing actions and initiatives with the committee.

Committee Member Sigdel offered to work with Committee Member Hossain to replace former Committee Member Eisenfeld on the safe space initiative.

Committee Member Hossain stated that she wanted to revise the focus of the initiative away from safe businesses, and more towards the creation and ability to create safe open space concepts similar to those in the Mosaic District in Fairfax.

Ms. Gilleran stated that she would put some talking points together to present to the committee at a future meeting.

The committee voiced that the initiative surrounding schools and STEM brought forth by Vice Chair Ramesh and Chair Dhakal has moved away from the committee and become more of a personal endeavor by the Vice Chair, and as such there was consensus to remove that item from the initiative list.

Committee Member Barth suggested that the committee through staff reach out to

the Herndon schools to bring in counselors, teachers, and students to hear about issues for youth in the schools. Staff agreed and asked Committee Member Barth to pass along any points of contact at the school.

Committee members discussed plans for future meetings, including the prioritization of guest speakers at future meetings. Staff will work on bringing in guest speakers at the committee's next meeting.

5. Comments

a. Comments from the Staff Members

There were no comments from staff.

b. Comments from the Committee Members

There were no comments from committee members.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Dhakal adjourned the February 15, 2024 Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Meeting at 8:37 PM.



Aaron Zoellick
Clerk of Boards and Commissions

Minutes approved by Herndon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee :
August 15, 2024