

HERNDON COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 5, 2026

1. Call to Order

Chair Lacher called the February 5, 2026, Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers Building, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were: Councilmember Alex Reyes; and Committee members Yelena Barth, Charles Hall, Rosemary Kendall, Fanny Salazar-Laske; Vice Chair K Scarry and Chair Lacher.

Staff present during the meeting: Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer; and Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk.

Determination of a Quorum

Chair Lacher determined there was a quorum of six Committee Members present and reviewed quorum procedures.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. November 6, 2025 Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee meeting minutes

Chair Lacher called for a motion to approve the November 6, 2025, minutes.

On motion of Committee Member Kendall, seconded by Committee Member Hall, and carried by a 6-0 roll call vote, the minutes of the November 6, 2025, CIEC meeting were approved. The vote was: Committee Members Barth, Hall, Kendall, Salazar-Laske, Vice Chair Scarry, and Chair Lacher, voting "aye."

Committee Member Hall introduced himself, noting his affiliation with Dulles Triangles. He shared some personal information including that he operates a small business, has been married for 30 years, and is looking forward to working with the CIEC Members and staff.

3. Comments

a. Comments from the Staff Members

Chair Lacher invited staff members for comments.

Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer, welcomed Committee Member Hall.

b. Comments from the Committee Members

Committee Member Barth provided comments about the inclusivity of agenda titles and suggested alternatives. She also discussed translation into languages other than Spanish.

c. Comments from Citizens

Chair Lacher reviewed the process and asked those who wanted to provide Comments from the Audience to come forward. There were no comments from the audience.

4. Presentation

a. Communications Overview

Chair Lacher recognized Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer, for an overview of the town's communications.

Mr. Heavner stated as requested at the November 6, 2025, CIEC meeting, staff prepared a presentation outlining the Town's communication and outreach program. The presentation was intended to familiarize the Committee with Town demographics and communication patterns to assist the Committee in making informed recommendations to the Town Council on communication and outreach priorities. Staff noted that the presentation was an opportunity to ask questions and offer recommendations to the Town Council to further enhance the effectiveness of the Town's communication program.

Mr. Heavner reviewed demographic data and communication trends within the Town, stating that a significant portion of the population speaks multiple languages. He reviewed general communication trends, including high smartphone usage and varying levels of information reach across communication channels.

Discussion included the role of traditional media and differences in communication preferences based on age and cultural background. Survey data was presented regarding resident communication preferences, indicating that the Town website, email, and social media channels are the primary sources of information, followed by the Town calendar, direct mail, and mobile applications. Discussion included the evolving use of platforms such as LinkedIn.

Staff discussed the Town's communications function as an internal service and its role in maintaining and advancing the Town's brand. An overview of the communications program, including staffing updates and the ongoing brand development process, was provided.

Discussion ensued among staff and Committee Members, including:

1. Emergency communications related to winter weather events, including outreach efforts, engagement metrics, translation across platforms, and staff capacity.

Additional discussion included the feasibility of providing real-time service updates, such as snowplow tracking, and operational limitations associated with implementation. Staff noted that emergency response efforts prioritize access for emergency vehicles and continuity of essential services.

2. Communication gaps within multilingual communities. Suggestions included instructional videos and clearer website navigation, and outreach utilizing community networks, such as homeowners associations, community leaders, and local organizations, to distribute information more effectively.
3. The Town's email distribution system to various organizations and groups and the limitations related to accessibility.
4. The importance of clear and consistent messaging during service disruptions, including snow removal, trash collection, and facility access.

Staff confirmed that branding elements, including the Town logo, fonts, and tagline were adopted in January 2025, and discussion included potential refinements to branding and community engagement opportunities.

Committee Member Kendall stated that the demographic data related to Middle Eastern populations may be inaccurate. Mr. Heavner stated that he would need to review the information and noted that demographic classifications may vary depending on the data source used.

5. Discussion

a. Review and Discussion of the Town's Welcome Packet

Chair Lacher opened a discussion about the Town's welcome packet and recognized Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer, to present an overview of the Town's welcome packet.

Mr. Heavner stated at the November 6, 2025 CIEC meeting, staff was asked to review the welcome packet for recommendations and updates. Mr. Heavner discussed the packet, reviewed a sample, and outlined community distribution methods and the Town's process when a new household registers for a water account.

There was discussion among staff and the Committee Members on the following topics:

1. Improving outreach to rental unit residents.
2. Expanding availability and accessibility of translated materials.
3. Considering QR codes or website links for language access.
4. Services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
5. Expanding communication through community leaders (HOAs and faith-based organizations).
6. Evaluating the use of inclusive terminology (e.g., “resident” vs. “citizen”).
7. Distribution gaps among residences.

b. Review and Discussion of the Town of Herndon Website

Chair Lacher recognized Mr. Heavner, Chief Communications Officer, for an overview of the Town's website.

Mr. Heavner stated that, at the November 6, 2025 meeting, CIEC staff was asked to review the Town's website and provide recommendations for improvements and updates. Mr. Heavner discussed the current website layout, navigation, accessibility, and communication tools, as well as opportunities to improve the user experience and enhance access to information for users. He also reviewed areas where additional outreach, clearer organization of materials, and multilingual resources could strengthen public engagement and accessibility.

Following discussion about the use of the website, staff provided a brief tutorial on where items were located and how to access various aspects of the website.

Chair Lacher opened the floor for Committee discussion. He asked staff to move the presentation portion moved up in the agenda and the comments at the end for the Committee's next meeting.

There was discussion among staff and the Committee Members on the following topics:

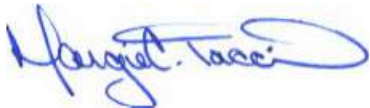
1. Improving access for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
2. The Committee's role in advising Town Council on inclusion and engagement.
3. Expanding outreach to small businesses.
4. Identifying and engaging key community partners including, but not limited to: Fairfax County Public Library, Herndon Parks and Recreation, and Arts Herndon.

Chair Lacher requested, depending on schedules, that the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Librarian from the Herndon Fortnightly Library provide presentations to the Committee about programs and events available to Town residents.

Committee member Salazar-Laske announced that Dr. Noto's last day as Principal of Herndon High School would be on Friday, February 13 and Clearview Elementary's, Principal Almquist would be retiring at the end of the school year. She also shared that former Principal, Justine Klena had just lost her husband.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Lacher adjourned the February 5, 2026, Community Inclusion and Engagement Committee at 8:41 p.m.



Margie C. Tacci
Deputy Town Clerk



Minutes approved by the CIEC: May 28, 2026