



# SANDY SPRINGS

GEORGIA

## Diversity and Inclusion Task Force

**Tuesday, June 8, 2021**

**Meeting Agenda**

**6:00 PM**

The May 11, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting will be held in person in the Barfield Conference Room at Sandy Springs City Hall (1 Galambos Way, Sandy Springs, GA 30328).

<b>Live-stream:</b>	<b>Public Meeting Portal (CivicClerk):</b> <a href="https://sandyspringsga.civicclerk.com/web/home.aspx">https://sandyspringsga.civicclerk.com/web/home.aspx</a>
	<b>Zoom Webinar:</b> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89776666575">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89776666575</a>
<b>Teleconference:</b>	<b>Phone:</b> (646) 558-8656 <b>Webinar ID:</b> 897 7666 6575

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Prayer - Rabbi Joshua Heller, Congregation B'nai Torah**

**III. Roll Call**

**IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

April 13, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting

May 11, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting

**V. New Business**

**DIT2021-015** Updates from the Task Force Chairperson  
*(Presented by James E. Bostic, Jr., Chair)*

**DIT2021-016** Discuss Recreation Subcommittee Report  
*(Presented by Clarissa Sparks, Subcommittee Chair)*

**DIT2021-017** Discuss Housing Subcommittee Report  
*(Presented by Olivia Rocamora, Subcommittee Chair)*

**DIT2021-018** Open Discussion

**VI. Other Business**

**VII. Prayer - Rev. Bill Murray, Rector, Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church**

**VIII. Adjournment**

*Individuals with disabilities who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in a public meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or facilities should contact the City Clerk at 770-730-5600 promptly for assistance. The City will make reasonable accommodations for those persons.*

Diversity & Inclusion Task Force – Parks & Recreation Subcommittee  
June 8, 2021

Raquel Gonzalez was instrumental in connecting me with Sandy Springs Community Relations Manager, Dan Coffey. Dan and I were able to speak by phone to discuss the City's current practices related to communications and engagement.

I explained that as a committee (Parks and Recreation) we wanted to develop a communication plan to roll out a survey to ask underserved communities and people of color what activities they would like to see in the city.

From our conversation I gathered that Community Partnerships are essential to getting the word out about any programming or community input

We have strong partnerships with city schools (Riverwood Middle School), CAC. Community Action Center, Sandy Spring Mission

The city has used surveys in the past and only receive an average 30% participation, so depending on our desired outcome a survey may not be the best communication.

We both agreed that we need to schedule a working session next week, with Michael Perry the Director of Parks and Recreation to get a better understanding of the department and what initiatives are currently in play.

Small Business Owner (Form Well Fitness), Cody Parks has volunteered to survey his clients via video to collect ideas on what they would like to see and do in the city.

Cody is advocating that we utilize the natural resources of the city and recognize the existing programs (Natural Parks)

Community Leader, Melanie Couchman of Sandy Springs Together is also interested in partner with the taskforce to help circulate the survey (if it's the best method) with Latinx community members. We could also schedule a meeting (Focus Group) to discuss ideas that the sub-committee is considering. This will allow us to get direct input and insights

Next Steps:

- Meet with Dan Coffey and Michael Perry to discuss current communication strategies
- Meet with Melanie Couchman to discuss partnership
- Organize a focus group of community groups to gain insight
- Restructure survey to disseminate to community at large
- Meet with subcommittee to assign roles



Sandy Springs Diversity and Inclusion Task Force:  
Housing Subcommittee Presentation of Recommendations

**THE CITY'S EXISTING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INITIATIVES:**

- **CDBG FUNDING:** Reallocate funds from Community Development Block Grant Funding to support housing affordability initiatives when the city's current Section 108 loan for sidewalk projects finishes. Anticipated date of initiative: 2024
- **HOUSING INCENTIVE POLICY:** Revisit the [Economic Development Incentive Policy for Affordable Housing](#). Since its creation in 2017, no developer of the North End has taken advantage of these incentives. Anticipated date of initiative: late 2021

**TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

*For immediate consideration and implementation in the next fiscal year*

- **Present Tony Ruth's "[Addressing Imbalance](#)" Cartoon Series to City Council** to frame the role and work of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force
- **Increase Access to Publications of Record & Other City Documents for Residents of Color**
  - **PUBLICATIONS OF RECORD:** Provide racks of newspapers in leasing offices and other complex common areas as an immediate first step to begin to bridge the inequality gap. The second step would be to expand the distribution to renter mailboxes.
  - **TRANSLATION SERVICES:** Hire one contract employee who provides Spanish copies/translations of major city plans, assessments, and final reports through a city-owned website and within 72 hours of their release. Invest in [Wordly](#) or similar technology to provide on-demand translation services of live meetings.

***Note:** The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force will pursue a Communications Subcommittee in the future to identify additional recommendations needed to establish stronger communication between the city and residents of color.*

- **Invest in Expertise on and Transparency of Housing & Best Practices for Redevelopment**
  - **PHASE 2 HOUSING STUDY:** Reinstate Phase 2 of the Housing Needs Assessment proposed in December 2020 but suspended by City Council in January 2021. This assessment will provide research-based recommendations of what other cities have done to tackle similarly complex housing obstacles.
    - Assistant City Manager Kristin Smith identified this study as a "strong first step" the city should take toward housing affordability.
    - This study should be carried out through HR&A, who completed Phase 1 of the Housing Needs Assessment. Reasons include

- Consistency with previous steps to understand the city’s challenges (Phase 1)
  - A breadth and depth of experience and knowledge of what other cities in the country are doing to meet this challenge
  - Alignment with the city’s approach and philosophy to hire outside consultants for expertise and ensuring a higher priority to address complex issues
  - Immediate inclusion of the Latino community in the housing affordability conversation: HR&A has agreed to provide all past documents such as the Housing Needs Assessment and all future assessment documents in Spanish.
- DIRECTOR OF HOUSING: create a position which is responsible for ensuring all redevelopment projects are evaluated and implemented through a racial equity lens and impact of diversity. Redevelopment includes trails, parks, commercial properties and residential housing, which all influence maintaining housing affordability for working families.
  - All housing development proposals considered should include a presentation of and public access to data regarding the sites impacted: location of the site, number of units impacted, and number of families making \$50K or less who are/are not able to continue living in the new development.
- **Increase the scope of incentives in the [Economic Development Incentive Policy for Affordable Housing](#).**
  - Expand the incentives beyond the North End
  - Lower tax rates to developers
  - Give height allowances to developers to allow them to build higher, creating more density to increase their profits
  - In exchange for incentives, developers must
    - Provide at least 25% of units designated for housing affordability for renters earning \$50K or less. Prices would be guaranteed for ten years. In the case of the city first purchasing property, this number should be increased to 30% of units designated for housing affordability.
    - Provide 3 BR units to ensure larger families are included in redevelopment plans and not just individuals and small families.
    - Provide a right of first return for residents displaced due to demolition.

*Note: The Phase 2 Housing Study, when reinstated, will provide additional options for how other cities are partnering with developers in the goal of creating housing affordability.*

- **Preserve and Protect All Remaining NOAHs.** In order to protect diversity on all levels, the city needs to take immediate steps to preserve the naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) the city is known for: older complexes.

- For all redevelopment permits submitted to the city, approval is contingent upon 30% of the units remaining affordable (for families making \$50K) for twenty years. These units must be a mix of one, two, and three bedroom units.