

Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 6:01 p.m., James “Jim” E. Bostic, Jr., Chair, presiding.

I. Call to Order

Chair Jim Bostic called the meeting to order at **6:01 p.m.**

II. Prayer – Rabbi Joshua Heller, Congregation B’nai Torah

III. Roll Call

Members present: Chair Jim Bostic, Desmond Curry, Raquel González, Joshua Heller, Nicole Morris, Bill Murray, Sal Ortega, Jose Osorio, Olivia Rocamora and Clarissa Sparks

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting

Motion and vote: Member Olivia Rocamora made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting. Seconded by Member Nicole Morris. The motion carried unanimously.

V. New Business

DIT2021-007 Updates from the Task Force Chairperson

Chair Jim Bostic reported that he had a conference call with Fulton County Schools Superintendent Dr. Mike Looney, Board Member Gail Dean, Chief Communications Officer Brian Noyse and Sandy Springs City Clerk Raquel Gonzalez. During the call Chair Bostic provided an overview of the goals and organization of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. Dr. Looney shared that Fulton County Schools will host two summer school session in 2021, focusing on reading and mathematics. Fulton County Schools anticipates three years of the summer learning programs as the current situation will not be fixed the first year of being back in school. Fulton County Schools plans to use the C.A.R.E.S Act money for extra learning, during and after school, for students who have been out of school since March, 2020. Dr. Looney expressed concern about the number of students that have missed school, particularly high school students. Chair Bostic invited Dr. Looney to join a future meeting with the Task Force.

DIT2021-008 Housing and Transportation Subcommittee Update

Housing Subcommittee Chair Olivia Rocamora reported the Housing and Transportation Subcommittee members interviewed over a dozen people, including tenants directly impacted by housing policies, housing experts, City officials, philanthropists, and other concerned residents. It is important that equity be created by (1) Understanding the needs faced by disenfranchised communities; (2) Identifying tools and/or opportunities to consider equity; and (3) Identifying foundational policy the City to implement offering equal access to both tools and opportunities. During its research, the Subcommittee learned the majority of Sandy Springs’ minority communities reside in apartments. There is a negative stigma associated with the term “affordable housing.” The City should embrace “housing affordability” policies. Current challenges identified include:

- **Communication.** The City’s publications of record are the Northside Neighbor and Sandy Springs Reporter newspapers, which are delivered only to homeowners and not to apartment residents, creating a lack of access for the renters. Additionally, 15% of Sandy Springs residents are Spanish-speaking, with no bilingual City services offered to them.

- Zoning. One of the highest in the nation, 85% of the land in Sandy Springs is zoned for detached, single-family homes; not apartments.
- Redevelopment. The City offers incentives to developers to redevelop areas that are considered lower value, including apartment complexes, making minority communities vulnerable to displacement. For example, the 2015 Gateway Project displaced many residents, of which 87% where minorities.

To address these challenges, the Sandy Springs City Council must:

- Build public will to embrace housing affordability and housing equity opportunities.
- Increase access to City publications of record.
- Provide translation services for City residents.
- Enact anti-displacement housing policies.
- Hire staff to protect renters from displacement, who oversees redevelopment from a racial equity and housing affordability lens.
- Encourage the renovation of aging apartment complexes, not just razing.
- Continue with Phase 2 of the Sandy Springs Housing Needs Assessment.

Chair Jim Bostic stated that small actions are important like having a public meeting, documents and the City website translated into Spanish, Korean and Chinese, including websites.

Member Sal Ortega stated that the City has made efforts, especially during the Pandemic, to translate important communications into Spanish. This has included documents, surveys, announcements, etc.

Member Raquel González remarked something as simple as translation services may become a part of the City's everyday practice and protocol. In the Sandy Springs Housing Needs Assessment there is discussion about high entry-level home purchasing price in the city leaves many people out of the market, which adversely affects minority communities. This has long-term effects in terms of wealth building and generational wealth. What does housing affordability initiatives look not just in terms of renters but also homeownership opportunities to disadvantaged communities?

Member Joshua Heller commented there are a lot of stakeholders who favor of diversity and opposed to racism, but do not want more apartments in Sandy Springs. For example, the Sandy Springs Council of Neighborhoods, a group of great folks, is looking to keep Sandy Springs appearing a certain way in terms of the type of housing stock available. How can we engage these type organizations to understand what we are trying to do here with housing affordability?

Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora replied we need to identify some of the most influential organizations and advocates within those groups who will assist in debunking myths and embrace this mission.

Chair Bostic instructed the Housing and Transportation Subcommittee to finalize their recommendations to prepare to present to the Mayor.

DIT2021-009 Recreation Subcommittee Update

Recreation Subcommittee Chair Desmond Curry reported the subcommittee created a mission state that will define it direction: 'To create an inclusive and healthy culture in Sandy Springs, where our recreation outlets are driven by the needs of our diverse residents.' The subcommittee will review current Sandy Springs recreation facilities and outlets to see if there could be more diverse events brought to them, as well

as create outreach plan to gather ideas from the community. Target groups includes youths, adults and seniors.

The 2018 Sandy Springs Recreation and Parks Master Plan discusses a 10-year master plan for 31.4 miles of proposed greenway, trails, sidepaths and neighborhood greenways that will connect to 12 schools, 15 parks, greenway spaces and even, neighboring jurisdictions. There is already a plan in place to bring more recreation opportunities to Sandy Springs, but a survey reported below-average utilization of the recreation and parks system due to lack of awareness. Word-of-mouth is how most residents learn about City programs and services. The subcommittee will next meet with the City's Recreation and Parks Director and the Chattahoochee Park Ranger to see how to publicize events on the Sandy Springs website. One of the main goals will be to inform the community of all that the City has to offer through savvy technologies.

Chair Jim Bostic reported that the top programming priorities listed in the Sandy Springs Recreation and Parks Master Plan were fitness and wellness programs, art classes, performing arts programs, and outdoor programs. These priorities do not feel particularly exciting to the folks we have been asked to include.

Member Clarissa Sparks stated to understand the what programs and activities the City should offer, from a youth, adult and senior perspective, the Task Force should survey residents as follows:

1. What is your favorite Sandy Springs Park?
2. What are the following programs and services most valuable to you and your family? (options: adventures; outdoor activities; adult programs and leagues; Arts and Cultural programming; community-wide events; community gardens; dog parks; hockey; indoor playgrounds, etc.)
3. In ranking order, how do you value the playgrounds and its equipment?
4. Programs during summers and non-school times, what are they or are they non-existent? Are they in walking distance of my residence?
5. Please check all the items that prohibit you and/or your family from using any of the Recreation and Park facilities or programs: Some of the options are: Unfamiliar with the facilities and/or programs available; Fees are too high; Prefer to use private facilities or facilities within the City and/or Metro Atlanta; Inconvenient times and locations; Programs are full; Facilities lack amenities or equipment; I don't feel safe.
6. What would you like to keep regarding Sandy Springs Recreation and Parks facilities and programs? What would you like to see improved? Then she included residency location in the City, i.e., north, south, central, west? She feels taking these questions or similar ones to speak with individual groups as far as age, as well as race, could provide us with a more culturally balanced community.

Housing Subcommittee Olivia Rocamora stated the larger theme is these plans being deeply problematic for communities of color and ethnicity. There is limited communication with residents in apartments, so they are not receiving or do not know when a survey is being issued. Were the City's surveys offered in any other languages beside English? The Task Force should look at how communications are conducted between the City and its diverse communities. There was a Transportation Master Plan presented to Council, and the AJC reported that Sandy Springs was seeking input from minority communities. The article alludes that a disconnect exists with minority communities. These newspapers are considered official publications of record and it is the City's job to make sure their own publications of record are reaching every resident.

Chair Bostic asked can the newspaper be more widely available in all of the apartments. Perhaps this needs to come as a recommendation when we talk to the Mayor.

Member Jose Osorio asked is the City engaging residents in the communities that they have not heard from. One of the big things in schools is to do parent engagement. When we talk about parent engagement,

151 it is not just sending out a flyer to come to a meeting. It is going out there and making sure everyone is
152 coming to the meeting. It is also understanding what is going to be discussed and ask for their input. The
153 big question for the City, say for the input on the Transportation Master Plan, how was that survey
154 distributed?
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156 **DIT2021-010 Discussion**
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158 **Chair Jim Bostic** commented that we have the responsibility to be able to go reach a different group of
159 people than we are normally are; go ask for their opinions about these issues on Recreation, on Housing, or
160 what concerns them. We need to recommend providing translation services so we can have information
161 available to people who speak Spanish, Korean and Chinese in our community. In the schools, that is
162 exactly what they do. The Task Force is responsible with making recommendations to the Mayor who
163 would then make the decision about where to go from there. Task Force members can talk with City
164 employees and City managers and people who head departments. In the end, we make these
165 recommendations to the Mayor and he's the one who makes the decision about taking it others, like the
166 City Council. The next Diversity and Inclusion Task Force meeting is May 11, 2021.
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168 **VI. Closing Comments**
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170 **Chair Jim Bostic** stated we have to find a way to reach out and involve more folks.
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172 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Olivia Rocamora** asked can a Google form survey be available to the
173 public so that it can be accessed.
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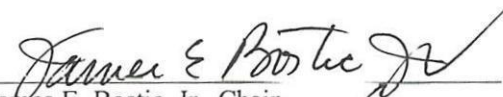
175 **Member Raquel González** stated the Housing Subcommittee document will be published with the agenda
176 packet, and can the survey can be accessed from there. Everyone is encouraged to share it with their
177 networks.
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179 **Chair Bostic** stated that both subcommittees should provide their written reports to be published.
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181 **VII. Prayer – Dr. Rev. Bill Murray – Holy Innocent's Episcopal Church**
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183 **VIII. Adjournment**
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185 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.
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189 James E. Bostic, Jr., Chair
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Raquel González, Recording Secretary