

1 **Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 1, 2021 at 6:03 p.m., James**  
2 **“Jim” E. Bostic, Jr., Chair, presiding.**

3  
4 **I. Call to Order**

5  
6 **Chair Jim Bostic** called the meeting to order at **6:03 p.m.**

7  
8 **II. Prayer – No invocation.**

9  
10 **III. Roll Call**

11  
12 **Members present:** Chair Jim Bostic, Raquel González, Joshua Heller, Nicole Morris, Sal Ortega, Jose  
13 Osorio, Olivia Rocamora and Clarissa Sparks

14  
15 **Members absent:** Bill Murray, Sal Ortega

16  
17 **IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting**

18  
19 **Motion and vote:** Chair James E. Bostic stated the meeting minutes for the April 13, 2021 Diversity and  
20 Inclusion Task Force meeting will be made available for approval at the June 8, 2021 Diversity and  
21 Inclusion meeting.

22  
23 **V. New Business**

24  
25 **DIT2021-011** Updates from the Task Force Chairperson

26  
27 **Chair Jim Bostic** reported that he attended two of the Mayor and City Council FY2022 Budget Workshops.  
28 The Mayor and City Council will consider a draft FY2022 budget on May 18<sup>th</sup>, with the first public hearing  
29 on June 1<sup>st</sup> and the second hearing with final approval being on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Housing Subcommittee Chair  
30 Olivia Rocamora will soon need to deliver recommendations to the Mayor. Additionally, Fulton County  
31 School Superintendent Dr. Mike Looney shared that Fulton County schools \$45M to provide a student  
32 recovery program to cope with student learning loss due to the pandemic. The Focus Plan program will  
33 help students in summer school, with extended learning time in small groups, and one-on-one sessions.  
34 There is substantial deficiencies in the student learning levels between those students who participated  
35 online and in person. The program will focus on reading and mathematics and will offered June 7 – 24, and  
36 again in August.

37  
38 **Member Jose Osorio** reported that Lake Forest Elementary School will host summer school for students  
39 from Heards Ferry, High Point, and Lake Forest. The registration deadline is May 28<sup>th</sup>.

40  
41 **DIT2021-012** Discuss Recreation Subcommittee Report

42  
43 **Chair Jim Bostic** stated the Desmond Curry resigned from the Task Force. Member Clarissa Sparks will  
44 serve as the Recreation Committee chairperson.

45  
46 **Recreation Subcommittee Chair Clarissa Sparks** reported the subcommittee is researching to identify  
47 the target audiences. The survey introduced at the April meeting was reviewed and tailored to meet the  
48 audiences of youth and senior adults. The subcommittee is reviewing the best way to submit the survey in  
49 order to get the best results. The subcommittee has not yet made contact with the National Park Service or  
50 the City of Sandy Springs Recreation and Parks Department. However, the subcommittee is has learned

51 that there is a on the current Sandy Springs website to post the current updates, specifically for parks and  
52 recreation.\

53  
54 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Olivia Rocamora** stated that a question Housing Subcommittee will make  
55 recommendation on how the City can strengthen communications with people of color. The survey should  
56 be provide in such a way to ensure everyone can respond to it. The Task Force should speak with key  
57 stakeholders to confirm the general areas for heavy recreation activity. Perhaps QR codes directing residents  
58 to the online survey can be placed at specific locations that community members gather for ease of access.  
59

60 **Recreation Subcommittee Chair Sparks** confirmed that the current expectation is to refer residents to the  
61 website. A communication plan is underway. The Recreation Department would benefit from a rebrand in  
62 order to engage the community in a different way. A draft copy of the survey will be shared with Task  
63 Force Members.  
64

65 **DIT2021-013** Discuss Housing and Transportation Subcommittee Report and Recommendations  
66 to the Task Force  
67

68 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Olivia Rocamora** stated we would like to see housing for teachers,  
69 healthcare workers, first responders, and others. Only .04% of Sandys Springs Fire Department employees  
70 live within the city. We are in a crisis. There should be a push for the Mayor and Council to fully support  
71 addressing this housing crisis. Referred to the Sandys Springs media constantly honoring those public  
72 service workers and confirmed that she would like to see staff not have to commute from long distances.  
73 Set 1 Recommendations include:  
74

- 75 • **Present Tony Ruth's "Addressing Imbalance" Cartoon to the City Council** to frame the role and  
76 work of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force.  
77
- 78 • **Strengthen the Communication between the City and Residents of Color**, by addressing the unequal  
79 access to the City's publications of records (Northside Neighbor and Sandy Springs Reporter) and  
80 providing limited translation services. Currently, the newspapers are only delivered to homeowners,  
81 some restaurants and some other public areas. Sandy Springs Reporter publisher Keith Pepper has  
82 expressed support to expand distribution of the paper. Racks of newspapers should be placed in leasing  
83 offices or other common areas. Distribution should be expanded to renter mailboxes. Additionally the  
84 City should hire one person who provides Spanish copies/translations of all City documents and final  
85 reports through a city-owned website and within 24 hours of a meeting/assessment. The City should  
86 invest in Wordly or similar technology to provide on-demand translation services of its public meetings.  
87

88 **Member Raquel Gonzalez** stated there are billions of City documents. It would be more practical to  
89 translate some records and documents, such as advertisings and notices. Many other City documents, such  
90 as contracts, would not be practical.  
91

92 **Chair Bostic** stated final reports should be immediately published in Spanish, directly after a City Council  
93 meeting.  
94

95 **Recreation Subcommittee Chair Sparks** asked is the most effective method of communication the Sandy  
96 Springs Reporter.  
97

98 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** replied that it is not the only form of communication out there,  
99 but would like the Task Force should start there as it is the City's option for formal communications.  
100

101 **Member González** stated that all public notices are all published in the paper, but that is not the City's  
102 only form of communication.  
103

104 **Member Nicole Morris** stated that her community receives the Report and Neighbor papers sporadically.  
105 The paper is only limited to a certain population with only 20% being relevant to her as a person of color.  
106 It is import that there is effective communication methods, to include email communication as it is common  
107 among most people.  
108

109 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** stated the City appears to favor homeowners.  
110

111 **Member González** stated the City should identify other means of communication. For example partner  
112 with different organizations, like schools, to help with communication to residents.  
113

114 **Member Morris** stated the schools would be able to distribute to a vast majority of residents.  
115

116 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** stated these newspapers are not the most effective method, as  
117 newspapers are dying, but this should be the first immediate action.  
118

119 **Member Joshua Heller** commented there are different papers that cater to specific groups of communities  
120 such as the Atlanta Jewish Times or Mundo Hispanico.  
121

122 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** stated technology is readily available to aid the community in  
123 engaging.  
124

125 **Chair Bostic** stated the Fulton County Schools has translation services readily available and are in  
126 agreement that they could do allot better in communicating with parents.  
127

128 **Member Jose Osorio** suggested the City first start with mailing communications and reviewing the  
129 feedback received and then decide the most effective methods. We should create something limited for  
130 translation services for the moment, to start with, as opposed to hiring someone solely to translate  
131 everything.  
132

133 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** stated the goal is to shine a light on the housing issues and the  
134 City must take the direction after. Further recommendations include:  
135

- 136 • **Invest in Expertise on Housing.** The City Council should immediately reinstate the Housing Needs  
137 Assessment requesting council immediately reinstate the study, which may have been postponed  
138 because of the pandemic. The City should hire a staff member who forms part of staff that  
139 approves/rejects development proposals and who oversees all redevelopment through a racial equity  
140 lens. Redevelopment includes trails, parks, commercial properties and residential housing, which all  
141 influence maintaining housing affordability for working families.  
142
- 143 • **Provide More Initial Transparency of Residents Impacted by Redevelopment.** All housing  
144 development proposals considered by City Council and/or Staff should include a presentation of and  
145 public access to data regarding the sites impacted: location of the site, number of units impacted, and  
146 number of families making less than \$50K who are/are not able to continue living in the new  
147 development.  
148

149 **Chair Bostic** stated these recommendations are low-hanging fruit.  
150

151 **Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** continued with Set 2 Recommendations:

152  
153  
154  
155  
156  
157  
158  
159  
160  
161  
162  
163  
164  
165  
166  
167  
168  
169  
170  
171  
172  
173  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182  
183  
184  
185  
186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195  
196  
197  
198  
199  
200  
201

- **Provide Incentives to Developers who Support Housing Affordability when Renovating Old Apartment Complexes or Engaging in New Construction.** Examples of incentives include lowering tax rates to developers; giving height allowances to developers to allow them to build higher, creation more density to increase their profits; and, the City first purchasing, developing, and incurring the cost of the infrastructure before it sells the property to a developer. Also, in exchange for incentives, developers must provide at least 25% of units designated for housing affordability for renters earning \$50K, along with other conditions; provide three bedroom units to ensure larger families are included in redevelopment plans and not just individuals and small families; and provide a right of first return for residents displaced due to demolition. When reinstated, the second phase of the Housing Needs Assessment will provide additional options for how other cities are partnering with developers in the goal of creating housing affordability.
- **Change Zoning to Allow for More Housing Creativity for New Construction of Non-traditional Housing Concepts.** Allow zoning for single family residents to build accessory dwellings on their property such as garage apartments or terrace level apartments. Allow zoning for multi-family housing on the boundaries of single family neighborhoods. Allow zoning for multi-family housing throughout the city, not just on the north end. Make inclusionary zoning a city-wide ordinance, ensuring that all new construction going forward includes housing affordability for residents earning \$50K.

**Member Osorio** stated this is a good start, and it will be a good to hear the City Council's feedback.

**Chair Bostic** stressed this is not a plan for the future, but rather for immediate action.

**Member Morris** commented social media outlets could help with the City's communication.

**Member González** stated that the City Communications Department has seven or so employees, whose job is to figure out how to communicate with the city residents. Like Rabbi Heller mentioned, would it be effective work with those who communicate with specific communities and maybe reach out to other platforms, such as radios talk shows, in order to meet the diverse communities' needs beyond a newspaper.

**Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** state we are talking about two forms of communication. Communication needs to be tackled, but specifically this talks about how zoning items can be communicated. Perhaps advocating for a third official City communication besides the current newspaper.

**Member Morris** stated there is a lack of awareness for the newspapers. How many people know to look at the Sandy Springs Twitter or Facebook pages? We need to make aware to everyone the existing communications channels.

**Chair Bostic** stated the communication channels should referenced all the time. This should be a repetitive process for the City's Communications Department.

**Member Morris** stated, as an example, a missed opportunity the City and the communication of its performing arts information, is the lack of use of the billboard outside of the City's performing arts center.

**Recreation Subcommittee Chair Sparks** stated communication is not just directly related to the form of communication used, but also the direct message relating back to those specific individuals that makes them feel included within the community. Advertisement out that will attract a diverse community.

202 **Chair Bostic** reiterated the Communications Department must ensure the same message is portrayed  
203 equally.

204  
205 **Member Osorio** suggested making a recommendation that the City Communication Department host an  
206 event to educate residents how the City advertise.

207  
208 **Recreation Subcommittee Chair Sparks** stated yes, the content is there, it just needs to be repositioned  
209 to attract a broader audience.

210  
211 **Member Morris** stated when the Housing Subcommittee got started, it was starting from the point that the  
212 City was seeking more input from minority residents, but had no clue how to do that.

213  
214 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** stated the Task Force has more work to do in regards to how  
215 best make recommendation about communicating. Those recommendations should be clear. In terms of the  
216 Housing Subcommittee Recommendation, perhaps the rephrase "Strengthen Communications between the  
217 City and Residents of Color" to "Increase Access to Publications of Record to Residents of Color." As a  
218 Task Force, we should talk more about how to communication about all types of things. It is concerning  
219 that homeowners passively receive the City's publication of record, but renters have more obstacles.

220  
221 **Member González** stated that without having the proper knowledge of housing expertise, I am  
222 uncomfortable making a recommendation that would affect housing directly.

223  
224 **Recreation Subcommittee Chair Sparks** stated the language in the recommendation is lofty, perhaps it  
225 could be more general. Can this be broken down into a smaller phase?

226  
227 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** asked are we talking about within a fiscal year, or maybe two  
228 years.

229  
230 **Recreation Subcommittee Chair Sparks** stated three to five years seems general, but I am not sure what  
231 the timeframe should be. It should be stated different.

232  
233 **Chair Bostic** stated when we start talking about zoning and the ability to have multifamily housing in single  
234 family home neighborhoods, people understand this more better than we think they do. Let us not kid  
235 ourselves. One of the things that has happened, is that it has all been moved to the North End. I suggest that  
236 what we have here, there are a lot of people that understand exactly what it says. This is not too lofty or  
237 whatever. This is very nitty gritty, and can be made as an early set of recommendation going into the next  
238 fiscal year.

239  
240 **Housing Subcommittee Member Rocamora** stated the verbiage in the recommendation should to reflect  
241 earning less than \$50K.

242  
243 **Motion and Vote:** Member Olivia Rocamora, seconded by Member Nicole Morris, to approve the Housing  
244 Subcommittee Recommendations. The motion passed unanimously.

245  
246 **DIT2021-014 Open Discussion**

247  
248 **Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** will make the necessary changes available to all.

249  
250 **VI. Closing Comments**

251  
252 **VII. Prayer** Rabbi Joshua Heller, Congregation B'nai Torah

253  
254  
255  
256  
257  
258  
259  
260  
261

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

  
James E. Bostic, Jr., Chair

  
Raquel D. González, Recording Secretary