

1 **Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., James**
2 **“Jim” E. Bostic, Jr., Chair, presiding.**
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4 **I. Call to Order**

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

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

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10 **III. Roll Call**

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

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15 **Members absent:** Nicole Morris, Bill Murray, Sal Ortega

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17 **IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

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19 April 13, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting
20 May 11, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting

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22 **Motion and vote:** Member Olivia Rocamora made a motion, seconded by Member Joshua Heller, to
23 approve the April 13, 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting minutes and the May 11, 2021
24 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

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26 **V. New Business**

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28 **DIT2021-015** Updates from the Task Force Chairperson

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30 **Chair Jim Bostic** stated the objective of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force is to identify things that
31 will have the 52% of the community that are diverse feel more a part of the Sandy Springs community. The
32 Mayor asked for periodic reports. If the Housing report is approved by the Task Force, then the Housing
33 Subcommittee will not report again until we learn the next steps that will be taken by the Mayor and the
34 City Council. Next, a Communications Subcommittee will next be setup to understand and make
35 recommendations that will help the City better communicate with all Sandy Springs citizens.

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37 **DIT2021-016** Discuss Recreation Subcommittee Report

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39 **Recreation Subcommittee Chair Clarissa Sparks** stated City of Sandy Springs Communications
40 Manager Dan Coffey shared with the Recreation Subcommittee the City's current practices for community
41 engagement. The City has formed partnerships with the community's schools and some of the nonprofit
42 organizations, such as the Community Action Center and the Sandy Springs Mission. The City has used
43 surveys in the past, but have only experienced about a 30% participation rate. This is the average
44 participation from all surveys, and not just those by the Recreation and Parks Department. The Recreation
45 Subcommittee will soon schedule a meeting with Mr. Coffey and the Parks and Recreation Director Michael
46 Perry where the Subcommittee's proposed survey will be reviewed as well as other communications guides.
47 Mr. Cody Parks of FormWell Fitness volunteered to speak with his clients to learn more of what they would
48 like to see incorporated in Sandy Springs, and will share what is learned with the Recreation Subcommittee.
49 Mr. Parks advocates for some of the parks and natural resources in Sandy Springs and suggests that the
50 City recognize those and use their existing programs so as to not reinvent the wheel. Finally, the Recreation
51 Subcommittee met with Ms. Melanie Couchman of Sandy Springs Together, which is a local organization

52 that has a connection with the underserved community and the Latino community. Ms. Couchman suggests
53 forming a focus group to learn how they would like to see Parks and Recreation play a role within the
54 community, and possible restructuring the survey. The Subcommittee's next steps are to restructure the
55 survey, organize a focus to gain better insight, and continue to meet as a subcommittee. The Subcommittee
56 continues to research.

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58 **Chair Jim Bostic** stated it is a great idea to look a national parks in the community. The 30% survey
59 participation seems to be a low number. Recreation and Parks Director Perry shared he has explored several
60 ways to get better participation from people who currently participate in Recreation programs.

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62 **Member Joshua Heller** stated it depends are how the survey is being disseminate. For emailed surveys, a
63 5% response rate is considered good. If it is mass disseminated, then 30% seems like a high number. How
64 do we get information from those who are not already aware of what are the offerings. Getting out into the
65 community, like through churches or other places people go, will be helpful.

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67 **DIT2021-017** Discuss Housing Subcommittee Report

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69 **Housing Subcommittee Chair Olivia Rocamora** shared when the Task Force last met, Member Nicole
70 Morris asked why inclusionary zoning had not been approved by the City Council in 2017 during the City's
71 Ten Year Comprehensive Plan update. At an August 2017 City Council meeting, Mayor Paul stated he was
72 hesitant to mandate inclusionary zoning. He said there was a strong culture of homeownership in Sandy
73 Springs and multifamily housing could create economic dependence. At the time, the Council determined
74 there would be an affordable housing taskforce that would meet in 12 months to report their findings. The
75 affordable housing taskforce was not created. In 2018 the North End revitalization taskforce was created,
76 but according to Assistant City Manager Kristin Smith the North End revitalization taskforce should not be
77 considered an affordable housing taskforce. Affordable housing can be a springboard to homeownership.
78 Recently, the draft recommendations approved at the May 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force
79 Meeting were shared with Mayor Rusty Paul. Mayor Paul agrees we have to find ways to support
80 homeownership. Assistant City Manager Smith shared the City currently has two affordable housing
81 initiatives. First, the City receives funding through the Community Development Block Grant and is
82 considering reallocating the funds to work on affordable housing. But this would not happen until the City's
83 Section 108 loan sidewalk program is completed, which is expected to happen in 2024. Next, in 2018 the
84 City created an economic incentive policy for affordable housing, but no developer of the North End has
85 taken advantage of these incentives. What the City is doing is not enough. Presented are the updated
86 Housing Subcommittee Recommendations.

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88 **Member Joshua Heller** is there another term that can be used for affordable housing. Many people
89 envision economic dependence and crime when they hear affordable housing. But, these are the people who
90 deliver our mail and teach our kids. Another term to consider is missing-middle. Also, can options be made
91 to create affordable homeownership opportunities?

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93 **Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** stated the City of Brookhaven uses the term workforce housing.
94 Brookhaven mandated inclusionary zoning in 2018.

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96 **Tom Robinson, Guest** asked is there about preserving the housing that is currently available – like, a
97 certain number of NOAHs. What are the number of NOAH properties exist today?

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99 **Subcommittee Chair Rocamora** replied the number one is preserving what we have. If there has to be
100 demolition or renovation, a contingency would apply. Tonight's recommendation will include changing
101 affordable housing to workforce housing and seeing if we can get some clarification on the existing
102 NOAHs.

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Member Jose Osorio stated looking forward, it is about how we can create a housing market that is affordable to everyone.

Recreation Subcommittee Chair Clarissa Sparks asked is there another name besides workforce housing.

Chair Bostic stated workforce housing is more descriptive of the housing we are talking about. This a first step. If someone has a better idea down the road, we can suggest it at that time.

Member Raquel Gonzalez stated it is important that the City continues the second phase of the housing needs assessment. Should our recommendations go beyond continuing the Housing Needs Assessment or continuing to work with housing experts to identify solutions that create housing affordability in the city that is supportive of diversity and inclusion?

Subcommittee Chair Rocamora replied the draft says “incentives might include,” and these are incentives I have found on my own that other cities are doing. These are not my recommendations. These are from people I have talked to who are the experts. It representatives over 20 voices, and I do think we need to reflect the specificity of the voices that we have interviewed.

Chair Bostic stated we need to make these as recommendations. The City Council can contract with people with the expertise to go look at these and make a decision about them. I am not a housing expert.

Motion and vote: Member Joshua Heller, seconded by Member Jose Osorio, made a motion to approve the recommendations. The motion carried unanimously.

DIT2021-018 Open Discussion

Chair Jim Bostic stated the Communications Subcommittee will be setup next.

Member Raquel Gonzalez asked what other committees are coming up.

Chair Bostic replied we will have two subcommittees at a time because we are a small group. Also, the next meeting will be August 10, 2021.

Member Jose Osorio shared Lake Forest Elementary School will host two summer school sessions – one in June and the second in July.

VI. Closing Comments

VII. Prayer – Rabbi Joshua Heller, Congregation B'nai Torah

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.


James E. Bostic, Jr., Chair


Raquel D. González, Recording Secretary

