

1 **Communications Subcommittee Meeting was held on Thursday August 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., Rabbi**
2 **Joshua Heller, Chair, presiding.**

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4 **I. Call to Order**

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6 **Communications Subcommittee Chair Joshua Heller** called the meeting to order at **6:07 p.m.**

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8 **II. Roll Call**

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10 **Members present:** Joshua Heller, Olivia Rocamora and Nicole Morris

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12 **III. New Business**

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14 **A. Key Objectives of the Subcommittee**

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16 **Joshua Heller, Communications Subcommittee Chair** stated the objective of the Communications
17 Subcommittee is recommend opportunities that will enable the City to communicate better and provide
18 more relevant information to the population, and so members of the community feel like they have an
19 effective way of communicating back with the City.

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21 **Member Nicole Morris** recommended staff from the City’s Communications Department attend a future
22 meeting.

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24 **Member Olivia Rocamora** agreed. Perhaps it should be the protocol of each meeting to include an expert,
25 or alternate meetings.

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27 **B. Reports from Initial Contacts**

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29 **Joshua Heller, Communications Subcommittee Chair** reported that Dan Coffey, Sandy Springs
30 Community Relations Manager, suggested that there are different organizations and nonprofits that are
31 reaching some members of the community who are otherwise not being reached effectively by the City,
32 including the Sandy Springs Mission and the Community Assistance Center. The committee should invite
33 Sandy Springs Communications Director Jason Fornicola to a future meeting, as to be able to provide direct
34 input. Also, Sandy Springs Together is a local group that is concerned about the City’s communications
35 and are particularly interested in apartment dwellers. Melanie Couchman of Sandy Springs Together raised
36 three issues: (1) the City’s paper of record not reaching apartment complexes; (2) the term “neighborhood”
37 often refers to single family homes, but apartment complexes are neighborhoods too; and (3) the City’s
38 website was recently reorganized and there are many broken links to that need to be reviewed.

39
40 **Member Olivia Rocamora** shared that she spoke with Los Niños Primero Executive Director Maritza
41 Morelli. Los Niños Primero provides educational assistance to over 50% of the city’s Latinx community.
42 Ms. Morelli suggests the City bring on a bilingual liaison to partner with local organizations that are already
43 established in the community. Leasing offices are underutilized and would find it beneficial to provide
44 communications through them in Spanish as well as partnering with the surrounding schools. Ms. Morelli
45 noted the Hispanic community is a valuable, but underrepresented voice in city happenings.

46
47 **Subcommittee Chair Heller** asked what are the barriers in supporting the African America community
48 within Sandy Springs.

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50 **Member Nicole Morris** replied there seems not to be a language resource issue with the African American
51 community, but the community may not feel connected to the City. There is no one that looks like them in

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52 City government. This addressed in hourly and salaried positions. There seems to be no champion in City
53 government that is external in the sense they are putting for the effort to make a connection with the African
54 American community. We need to first establish some way to partner, connect and engage with the
55 community.

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57 **Subcommittee Chair Heller** asked what are the nongovernmental organizations that have access to the
58 African American community.

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60 **Member Morris** replied there is not one that currently exists for the City of Sandy Springs. For example,
61 there are no black churches in Sandy Springs. There is a gap. African Americans are living in Sandy
62 Springs, but do not feel a part of this community from an outreach prospective. The one place with a
63 consistent point of contact is through the public schools and their youth programs. This topic should be
64 had within a larger discussion with the Task Force.

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66 **Subcommittee Chair Heller** tasked Member Rocamora to reach out to Latinx community servicing
67 organizations and Member Morris to connect with African American community servicing organizations,
68 and to report findings at the next Subcommittee meeting. The organizations do not have to be based in
69 Sandy Springs.

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71 **C. Identify Target Audience and Communities**

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73 **IV. Other Business**

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75 **Joshua Heller, Communications Subcommittee Chair** stated in regards to the paper of record and it not
76 reaching all residents, an idea is to identify seven or eight locations throughout the city to place information
77 centers. Also, regarding translation services, Dan Coffey shared that City is currently using automatic
78 translation services and then having someone check the translations. The Subcommittee should define for
79 the City what communications are important for communities of colors to receive translated. What's the
80 rubric?

81
82 **Member Nicole Morris** commented communications should be about engagement. Residents may not
83 want everything, but should know where to find it. Representation within the City is important. All residents
84 would then have a vested interest in caring in all aspects of what is happening.

85
86 **Subcommittee Chair Heller** asked how will the City measure success. And, what are the things the City
87 can do to make every resident feel like they have an open line. Engaging an expert at the next meeting will
88 be helpful, to make sure we are not reinventing the wheel. This is a collaborative effort, not competitive or
89 combative.

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91 **V. Adjournment**

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93 **Motion and vote.** Member Olivia Rocamora, seconded by Member Nicole Morris, made a motion to
94 adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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96 The meeting adjourned at **6:43 p.m.**

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102 Joshua Heller, Communications Subcommittee Chair

_____ Raquel D. González, Recording Secretary