

DRAFT

DUBLIN COMMUNITY TASK FORCE
Tuesday, October 20, 2020
Minutes of Meeting

Mr. McDaniel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present were: Mr. Kofi Amponsah, Ms. Deneisha Franklin, Dr. Todd Hoadley, Ms. Bridgette Mariea, Mr. Jamil Robinson, Mr. Isao Shoji, Ms. Sylvina Smith, Ms. Nancy Sofowora, Ms. Audrey Bannister, Mr. Will Knapke and Mr. Stephen White.

Absent were: Ms. Erica Adams, Ms. Rama Billakanty, Mr. Ron Jordan, Ms. Lynette Mercado, Dr. Ajay Satyapriya, Mr. Vincent Wang.

Staff members present were: Mr. McDaniel, Mr. Rayburn, Ms. Puranik, Ms. Readler, Ms. Weisenauer and Chief Paez.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Shoji moved to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2020 Community Task Force meeting.

Mr. White seconded.

Motion carried.

Open Meetings and Public Records

Ms. Readler shared a presentation with the task force members explaining open meetings of a public body and public records. Public business must be conducted in a public setting. She explained the importance of following the open meetings law and the need for transparency. She defined public records and discussed the need to use social media responsibly.

Discussion Items

- Microsoft Teams

As a result of the desire expressed by the group to have a communication platform to share information, Ms. Puranik stated that she had created a new "team" in Microsoft Teams called "Community Task Force 2020." This is a central location for the members of the task force to use to collaborate on ideas, share articles, etc. Members were reminded that discussions cannot be held in Teams regarding the business of the task force, rather this is a place to share information with each other. Ms. Puranik gave a brief overview of the Team in Microsoft Teams and indicated that she would be adding all the task force members to the team.

Mr. McDaniel stated that the task force members discussed the possibility of doing a survey in the community at the last meeting. He stated that staff is talking internally about what outreach tools are available. He is open to suggestions and encouraged task force members to come forward with any ideas.

- Dublin Schools Update

Dr. Hoadley stated that there is a great deal of effort and work currently happening in the schools, but due to the pandemic the efforts are not getting as much visibility. He thanked Mr. Amponsah for his leadership in Black Students United and was pleased to announce that there is now a Black Students United group in Dublin Jerome. He stated that work continues internally with employees. They are doing a great deal of reflection as a result of the 220 + comments that have been received on the "Dear Dublin" Instagram page. School employees are working on diversity, equity and inclusion training for half the day today. Dr. Hoadley stated that Dr. Gholnecsar Muhammad will be speaking to the Dublin certified teachers on November 3rd. She is a teacher at Georgia State University and an expert in looking at marginalized populations of youth and helping schools in closing achievement gaps. The classified school staff (bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitorial staff etc.) will be completing different online modules in addition to Dr. Muhammad regarding implicit bias and cultural sensitivity to promote a discrimination-free workplace. Steve Francis, Franchise D&I Solutions, LLC, provided training for the central office and operations center. Mr. Francis spent 4 hours with staff and will be coming back for additional training for all building administrators. Dr. Deagle, Deputy Superintendent, and Jill Reinhart, Executive Director of Teaching & Learning are leading an internal group of 50 employees having discussions and making selections for training sessions. They are also looking into curriculum review with some parents as well.

- LGBTQ+

Mr. Rayburn stated that a Contact Clerk of Council form was received from a community member who wanted to know what the City is doing toward inclusion and protections for the LGBTQ+ community. The City's response to the inquiry was the following:

- The establishment of the Community Task Force (Resolution 37-20) as well as laying out social equity, inclusion and diversity as core values for the City;
- The establishment of two LGBTQ+ liaisons who will serve as a vehicle for communication and a conduit between the community and the City. Additional information regarding the liaisons and their role can be found on the Teams website that Ms. Puranik spoke of earlier; and

- In 2015, Resolution 86-15 was adopted which rejected discrimination of any kind and urged the Ohio General Assembly to consider legislation to ensure equal opportunity and respect for all persons.
- Chief's Advisory Committee Update

Chief Paez gave a brief update on the progress of the Chief's Advisory Committee that was established at the same time as the Community Task Force. He thanked the group for taking the time to share their knowledge and ideas. Chief Paez gave a brief description of the make-up of the advisory committee. There have been two meetings of the committee so far. The committee had an introduction session in their first meeting to get to know one another as well as an introduction to the Police Department and its mission, goals and core values.

Chief Paez briefly shared that the second meeting touched on the following:

- a redesign is underway to the Police website largely due to the communications that have been held over the summer;
- clarifying the recent news story regarding the plot to kidnap Michigan's Governor. News outlets erroneously reported that the planning meeting for this plot was held in Dublin, which is false; and
- discussing the School Resource Officer program.

Mr. Shoji shared that the discussions were active and fruitful. He appreciated that everyone in both the Task Force as well as the Chief's Advisory Committee see the relationship with the schools as vital. He also commented on the interest in learning about the Police Department's communications and outreach. He enjoyed building a foundation of understanding and he stated he looks forward to continuing the conversation.

Open Discussion/Way Ahead

Mr. Amponsah stated that he would like the Task Force to consider moving forward with suggestions to the City and the Schools given the short term of members. He wants to keep this subject in the forefront and doesn't want the discussion and work to slow or stop. He would like to hear feedback from the City and Schools on the suggestions and recommendations that are given, so he stated he would not want to wait until the end of the term to make those recommendations.

Mr. White stated that he agreed that they needed not only recommendations but tangible outcomes. He suggested putting together a roadmap that would incorporate tracking mechanisms. He described a report that articulates what the recommendations are and how the action items will be tracked. He stated that he too would like to seize

the moment, but he would like to use data and research to help drive the decision making.

Ms. Sofowora stated that discussion was held at the last meeting to try and gauge what the community wants. She asked how the community is aware that these meetings are being held. Mr. McDaniel stated that the meetings are publicly advertised and the City leverages the use of social media to push out notifications also. Regarding the survey, Mr. McDaniel stated that the use of a survey will be pursued but it is important to determine what you are trying to achieve from a survey.

Ms. Mariea stated that to keep everyone engaged and to take advantage of the current situation, she suggested the members of the Task Force make recommendations that they feel are relevant and important and then assess them as a group. There may be a few items that come to the top that could be acted upon more quickly as opposed to items that would need more research or City assistance. She encouraged the Task Force to lead the change as a group.

Mr. Amponsah stated that he agreed with Mr. White's comments regarding tangible actions. He would like to see something put in place that will last 5 or 10 years or longer. He asked Dr. Hoadley what was being done in the school system that will last several years. If Dublin is the leader as we claim to be then we need to be the leader in creating something tangible that will last.

Ms. Franklin stated that she agreed that it is about accountability. Knowing the level of accountability that the City is willing to take on these recommendations is key for sustainable change. A large piece of why diversity and inclusion efforts have failed is the lack of accountability. Being able to track the impact and being held accountable when the results are not as we had hoped or expected is important. She also suggested that zeroing in on three to four key themes, it may be easier to figure out what things can be done now and what things will have to happen later.

Ms. Sofowora proposed a theme surrounding diversity in the workforce and the desire to see representation within the City and Schools and to ensure that the whole community is actually represented in leadership and staffing.

Ms. Franklin agreed with that proposed theme and also suggested education as a theme.

Ms. Mariea suggested consideration of housing, diversity of residents and rentals within the City limits. There is a lot of opportunity to explore this topic. She would like to learn more. She was surprised to hear that there were kids that didn't feel welcome in Dublin. When looking at housing, it will be advantageous to look at not only race, but income also.

Mr. Amponsah asked how the City would go about learning about the income levels and housing and such.

Mr. McDaniel stated that a regional housing study is being done by MORPC (Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission) and Dublin is included in that study. He stated it is not final just yet, but Dublin helped to fund the study so that we could drill down more on the details of the study after it was completed. Staff has been discussing regional housing and possible recommendations that could come from the study. A goal of City Council is the 2035 plan, which is a refresh of the Community Plan. The 2035 plan is intended to look on the horizon and what the future holds which has implications from an infrastructure, planning type, neighborhood types, etc. viewpoint. Housing will also be a component of that. The challenge for Dublin will be we don't have a great deal of land available for development of housing according to the economic concept for the City. Regarding the workforce, Mr. McDaniel stated that Dublin is the second largest employment center in Ohio, so the expectation is that people will be commuting to Dublin to work.

Mr. Shoji stated that we ought to be cognizant of how we are perceived as a City by not only people outside of Dublin, but our residents, stakeholders, students and workers. He stated that what matters is measuring perception of where we are in reality. Asking ourselves what are the things that we want to be known as so people will be proud to call Dublin home. Keep asking the same questions and check how we are making progress.

Ms. Sofowora agreed and added that when we set the metrics or benchmarks, we need to identify what the end goals will be.

Ms. Mariea stated that another idea for a theme is policing. She stated the topic may already be covered with the Task Force and the Chief's Advisory group. Transportation could be another category or theme. Transportation is critical in getting workers around and can have economic and environmental impact.

Ms. Franklin stated that some of these themes could be grouped together in a broader "community" category. She suggested the themes: Workforce, Education and Community.

Mr. White stated he likes the community category as well. He would like to tackle implicit bias. He would like to explore what tactics or strategies we could do as a community to strive to be uncomfortable with and to combat implicit bias. What are the tactics that we could share so that we as a society or community can stop implicit bias and grow as individuals.

Mr. McDaniel summarized the comments from members. He thanked Mr. White for bringing up the topic of implicit bias. He stated City Council has charged this Task Force to face the issue of implicit bias head-on.

Ms. Sofowora stated that she wants to hear more student voices while they are still in school about their experiences. She added it is important that everyone is aware of what their experiences are.

Ms. Bannister stated that students in the same family can have different experiences. She gave the example of herself and her sister and how their experiences in school were very different.

Mr. Amponsah asked Dr. Hoadley about the former staff member at Dublin City Schools that was dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion. Is there consideration to bring that position back? It would help to have someone dedicated and solely responsible for diversity, equity and inclusion. Dr. Hoadley stated that there have been three or four administrative positions over the years and it has had varying measures of success. He believes this responsibility would be a heavy lift for one person.

Ms. Sofowora asked what some of the challenges were. Dr. Hoadley stated that with 24 buildings and turnover in personnel due to levy defeat, the person was reassigned due to financial cuts. It is a challenge due to the size of the school district to have one person be responsible for something across the entire district.

Ms. Franklin stated that they need to know what the limitations are. If there are not people in positions to execute recommendations, then this would be very hard. She asked Mr. McDaniel about the City's diversity and inclusion training. Is there a way to tailor these trainings to meet them where they are; such as, asking what unconscious bias looks like in your day-to-day life and what can be done to combat that?

Mr. McDaniel stated that over two years ago, a series of meetings with senior leadership team was conducted about diversity and inclusion. We want to lead by example. Mandatory training has been rolled out that will be completed yearly in an effort to make slow and steady cultural change. The City is currently completing a strategic assessment of our diversity, equity and inclusion. Mr. McDaniel stated that we, as an organization, have failed. He will be reporting that information out to the Task Force and will look for their advice and counsel on that. He stated that he is aware that there is a lot to do.

Ms. Franklin stated that the DE&I efforts that are taken are usually assuming that arming people with information is enough, however it is educating people in how to apply that knowledge. Applying the knowledge to affect the processes and making the

processes equitable in daily life so it won't matter who is in charge of the process if the process is fair in itself.

Mr. Robinson stated that since the "Dear Dublin site" already exists, categorizing the subject matter of those posts and seeing what issues are most represented is a way to begin addressing some of those issues.

Ms. Smith stated that the posts are a great place to start, however she expressed concern that it represents only a small portion of people. She also added that in her profession they receive training every year, but part of being trained is putting it into action. It is up to the individual to act on the training.

Ms. Sofowora stated that she agrees a large portion of the population could be missed. She asked what makes certain populations stay silent. What makes certain cultures not want to speak out?

Ms. Smith stated that many see the benefit that they experience living here. It is a difficult balance for some people because they like it here in Dublin, so they don't want to complain.

Mr. Shoji stated that language could be a barrier. If a person is not comfortable with speaking English, you are not likely to speak up. It could also be a cultural difference. It is possible that they do not expect leadership to care so they fend for themselves or they may not know how to speak out. They don't want to be viewed as ungrateful.

Ms. Sofowora expressed concern for the population that has needs but the needs won't be addressed because they won't speak out. She stated that we need to make sure they are part of our community and have a right to speak.

Mr. Robinson stated that the "Dear Dublin" site is anonymous, so that is a good protection for people to be able to voice a concern but still remain private.

Ms. Franklin stated that there isn't an "either/ or". We need to ensure that people don't have to choose between living here and speaking up. If you live here, you are part of the community and have the right to speak up.

Ms. Smith offered to get information out to her surrounding community members so that they can speak out.

Ms. Franklin stated that she wants to be sensitive to any cultural differences or beliefs. She wants people to know it is an option and she would like to be able to help those who are having an issue.

Mr. McDaniel agreed that appreciating the differences in cultures is important.

Ms. Mariea referenced a letter sent to the School Board from a graduate of Dublin Schools that recommended curriculum changes. She thought the recommendations were good.

Dr. Hoadley stated that he did receive it in the form of an e-mail. There are curriculum reviews in a core area and this year it is Social Studies. Parents were invited to participate in these discussions. Dr. Hoadley stated that it is challenging because a university could offer several different Social Studies classes, but high school has a pre-scripted curriculum set forth by the state of Ohio. The hardest thing is keeping the polarized politics of our country out of the Social Studies curriculum.

Mr. Amponsah stated that the letter discussed was originally a petition.

Ms. Mariea asked if meeting in a month, Task Force members should come with more specific recommendations.

Mr. Amponsah stated that members should definitely come prepared with some topics and suggestions of what action items the Task Force can start with.

Mr. White agreed and stated that he has started making a list of experts that could help inform some of the discussion and recommendations. He will bring that list back to the discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. Franklin suggested having a concrete outcome and what they want to accomplish at the next meeting.

Ms. Sofowora stated that having a document that could get some things in writing would be helpful. Mr. McDaniel stated that the agenda can help guide the topics so the Task Force can pick up from where it left off the previous meeting.

Mr. White stated that he liked the idea of sub-committees because it could help expedite the work. Mr. Readler stated that it would be good to work in small groups, but not assign specific committees, because then those would have to be public. If a few members want to talk about ideas to bring forward to the group that is fine.

Mr. McDaniel asked the group to be thinking about a Chair and Vice Chair. This will need to be decided at the beginning at the next meeting.

Ms. Sofowora stated that things can be shared in Microsoft Teams. Ms. Readler stated that as long as there is no back and forth discussion between members, strictly sharing information where everyone can see it is fine.

Mr. McDaniel suggested to give Microsoft Teams a try and see if that helps to share information and move forward.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Deputy Clerk of Council