



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 8, 2017 – 5:30 PM
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC) convened at 5:30 p.m. on the above date to conduct a Regular Meeting at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Vice Chair Jeff Walters (Seat M) presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present: Heidi Shepard, Seat A
Lisa Slayton, Seat B
Montean Jackson, Seat C
Juanita Webb, Seat D
Herbert Butler, Seat G
Marna Sanford, Seat I
Douglas Toelle, Seat J
Jo Ann Borges, Seat K (arrived at 5:35)
Rita Davis, Seat L
Amber Taylor, Seat N
June Rogers, City Council Member

Members Absent: Travis Cole, Seat E (excused)
Vacant, Seat F
Rosalind Kan, Seat H (unexcused)
Kelvin Lee, Seat O (excused)
Angela Foster-Snow, HR Dir. (excused)
Jim Matherly, Chair (excused)

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk
Eric Jewkes, Police Chief
Christina Rowlett, HR Admin
Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff
John Coghill, State Senator

CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT

Vice Chair Walters called the meeting to order and asked Ms. Sanford to read aloud the FDC Mission Statement. Ms. Sanford read aloud the Mission Statement.

Vice Chair Walters welcomed new members, Heidi Shepard and Lisa Slayton. Ms. Slayton and Ms. Shepard introduced themselves, and they each gave a brief bio of themselves. All FDC members introduced themselves for the benefit of the new members.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Toelle, seconded by Ms. Jackson, moved to APPROVE the Agenda.

Vice Chair Walters called for objection to APPROVING the Agenda and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

CITIZENS COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)

Wendy Tisland, 5145 Klondike Drive, Fairbanks – Ms. Tisland stated that she is the HR Director at the FNSB School District. She stated that the school year is about to start, and she spoke to some upcoming activities and events. She thanked the FDC for all the work they do. At Vice Chair Walters' request, Ms. Tisland stated that she would bring the district's statistics on ethnicity back to the FDC. She stated that there are fifty different languages spoken in the community. She spoke briefly to tutoring opportunities and to 2017-2018 enrollment numbers.

Frank Turney, 329 6th Avenue – Mr. Turney stated that he is glad to see Senator John Coghill at the meeting. He referenced the article in the agenda packet about Alaska communities' participation in

juries. He read aloud part of the article. He recalled a story about how someone had asked him if he was gay; he stated that he is not gay. He stated he believes that marriage should be between a man and a woman. Mr. Turney stated that he has observed many jury trials, and that there is a problem with jury discrimination. He commented that he comes to FDC meetings because he is concerned with racial discrimination.

Hearing no more requests for testimony, **Vice Chair Walters** declared Citizen's Comments closed.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of July 11, 2017

Mr. Toelle, seconded by **Ms. Sanford**, moved to APPROVE the Regular Meeting Minutes of July 11, 2017.

Vice Chair Walters called for objection to APPROVING the Minutes and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

FAIRBANKS POLICE DEPARTMENT (FPD) & HUMAN RESOURCES REPORTS

Chief of Police Eric Jewkes reported that there are three officers currently in field training, and the department sent four recruits to the academy the prior week. He stated that FPD has been very busy. He spoke to the "Run from the Cops" event the weekend prior and stated that the event turned out well and was well-attended. Chief Jewkes spoke to the use of FPD's motorcycle, and he briefly talked about the lateral hiring bonus. He stated that FPD still needs to hire six more people to be at full staff. He stated that if the two female recruits make it through training, there will be a total of three women on the force.

Ms. Borges apologized to Chief Jewkes and stated that some members have not been supportive. She stated that she believes there are going to be some positive changes and that the group appreciates FPD. **Ms. Webb** stated that she recently witnessed a kidnapping, and she commended FPD and Dispatch for the work they do.

Chief Jewkes stated that there should be excellence in every contact the police make with the community.

Vice Chair Walters encouraged FDC members to get involved in the FPD interview process the next time it comes around.

HR Admin Christina Rowlett stated that the City is recruiting for a clerk position at FPD; she stated that the Attorney's Office hopes to soon hire a Deputy City Attorney. She stated that the City continuously accepts applications for FPD and Dispatch.

Ms. Borges asked if the FDC banner had been found. **Ms. Rowlett** replied that it had not, but that she would speak to **Ms. Foster-Snow** about it.

DIVERSITY TOPIC OF THE MONTH

a) Guest Speaker Senator John Coghil, Jury Selection Process

Alaska State Senator John Coghill thanked the FDC for all its work. He spoke in great detail to criminal justice reform and to his involvement in the process thus far. He stated that the system and the legislation is not perfect, and it is a work in progress. He stated that Senate Bill 91 was helpful in some ways and not helpful in others; he spoke to two other bills aimed at correcting some of the problems that arose with SB 91. He stated that the goal is to reduce crime. Sen. Coghill stated that he works with Tanana Chiefs Conference to see what can be done better in the jury selection process. He spoke to the need to divert some cases to tribal court and to the challenges in doing so; he indicated that individuals should be held accountable in their own communities. He stated that the differences between constitutional law and tribal law is a challenge. Sen. Coghill stated that jurors need to be given discretion, which is an uphill battle in Alaska. He stated that he needs to do some research to identify how difficult it is to have a diverse trial in a small Alaskan community. He commented that change will come slow and that he has been working on these types of issues for three years in the legislature. He stated that as long as he is in the legislature, he will continue to work on the issues. Sen. Coghill stated that he is unsure if he is ready to blame all the problems on prejudice; he indicated that other things are going on. He stated that he is interested in solving problems.

Mr. Butler brought up the issue with communities who have more than one government, which can cause conflict and tension. **Ms. Jackson** asked questions about how the jury selection process works and how it has worked in the past; she asked about presenting minorities with opportunities.

Senator Coghill stated that risk assessments need to occur to determine whether people can stay employed and take care of their families prior to trial. He stated that the courts and law enforcement need to communicate better. He stated that the District Attorney's Office does not prosecute 33% of the cases police bring to them.

Mr. Butler stated that while accountability is an issue, another issue is a lack of legal expertise. He stated that quite often, poor individuals who are arrested end up with public defenders who are fresh out of school with little experience.

Senator Coghill stated that he sympathizes with that to a point. He stated that those in the middle class who can afford an attorney but have to make a major sacrifice to retain one also has his sympathy. He commented that he struggles with a situation where one party can afford a good attorney and the other party has no money.

Ms. Sanford asked Sen. Coghill if he would agree that part of the focus should be on community education and that the purpose is to change behavior and not just save money. Senator Coghill replied affirmatively but stated that he just came through a campaign where there was a lot of misinformation. He stated that some believe that jail time is the only answer. He stated that drug and alcohol problems have not declined and that changing people's behavior is a slow process. He indicated that behavioral health services are also a problem, and they are being addressed—just not quickly enough.

Vice Chair Walters asked how barriers are being addressed if recidivism is a big concern. Sen. Coghill stated that people have to be given a plan to not go back to jail. He stated that giving people incentives to work their jail time down is a controversial issue and is a work in progress. He stated that they have been unsuccessful in getting a training program into the jails for those who have committed sexual assault. Members and Sen. Coghill discussed other barriers to re-entry such as access to food stamps and housing.

Ms. Rogers spoke to the need for preventative measures; she stated that every individual needs to take responsibility for the community in which they live. **Sen. Coghill** stated that the goal is justice and peace, but people also need to be held accountable. He stated that people ought to be given a pathway to recover, and if they refuse they should be removed from society.

Ms. Sanford asked about the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission's (CJC) timeline on projects. She asked whether they would be looking into jury-related issues. **Sen. Coghill** replied that the CJC was not really commissioned to look at jury issues; he stated it may be more appropriate for the legislature to address those types of issues. He explained that the CJC is looking at barriers to employment; he added that there are over 450 barriers for someone with felony. He stated that the CJC will also look at the effectiveness of the funds being spent and at sexual assault issues and degrees of sexual assault. He stated that not all sexual assaults should be punished the same.

Mr. Toelle stated that a large percentage of jailed people have disabilities, and some end up there because of a lack of services—not because they are guilty of a criminal offense. He asked whether SB91 addressed that issue. **Sen. Coghill** stated that they tried to get behavioral health funds to go where they belong. He stated that Fairbanks is a small community, and it is difficult to get its voice heard in the legislature. He stated that risk assessment tools will change the way people think about incarcerated people, and the fact that these issues are being discussed is a good thing.

Vice Chair Walters stated that he and **Ms. Sanford** met to discuss the jury selection issue. He stated that he believes **Mr. Turney's** issue with jury selection is at the level when the pool is called in and minorities are often dismissed. **Mr. Turney** questioned what the FDC would do about the problem. He stated that **Sen. Coghill** has introduced three bills related to juries.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) FDC Recommendation on City Code Amendments

Mr. Butler, seconded by **Ms. Jackson**, moved to RECOMMEND to the City Council that the proposed changes be made to the Fairbanks General Code.

Vice Chair Walters called for objection to the motion to RECOMMEND and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Calendar of Events

Vice Chair Walters stated that he met with **Ms. Foster-Snow**, and they discussed the calendar and the missing FDC banner. He stated that Explore Fairbanks has a wonderful calendar on their website, and he listed several upcoming community events. He encouraged everyone to look at Explore Fairbanks' online calendar.

Ms. Borges stated that the FDC should share itself with the community and attend events. She questioned **Mayor Matherly's** interest in exposing the FDC to the community. She stated that the banner has been missing for months and has not been repurchased; she stated that members do not have nametags. She stated that if **Mayor Matherly** would like the FDC to seriously represent him in the community, he should step up, move forward, and be involved.

Mr. Butler stated that he does not see anything in the purpose about the FDC selling itself to the community. He stated that the FDC is to act as an advisory body to local government. He stated that the FDC is to be guided by an action plan that was written in the beginning. He commented that he has not been on the FDC for very long but that since he has joined, the group has not discussed the Diversity Action Plan (DAP). He stated that he was surprised to learn that the FDC participates in community activities.

Ms. Slayton expressed her belief that it is good to have some visible presence in the community.

Vice Chair Walters stated that the DAP was approved in earlier in the year, and it is good for five years. He stated that while the FDC may not attend every event, there is value in visibility. He stated that he would like the calendar to be discussed at the next meeting early in the agenda.

Ms. Shepard spoke about an upcoming event at UAF. She stated that her office will help coordinate a “bus day” that will teach students how to utilize that community resource. She stated that UAF also has a Diversity and Action Center that puts on events all year; she stated that she is sure they would welcome representation from the FDC.

FDC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Vice Chair Walters stated that he already spoke about the last Education & Outreach/Media & Communications Committee; he stated that he and Ms. Foster-Snow were the only members present.

Ms. Sanford stated that attendance at Policy & Procedure Committee meetings has been a challenge recently. She asked those on the Committee to stay briefly after adjournment to discuss the regular date and time for the Committee meetings.

Vice Chair Walters asked Ms. Slayton and Ms. Shepard to think about which Committee(s) they would like to join.

FDC MEMBERS COMMENTS

Ms. Webb shared that the Wallbusters and Access Alaska is holding an ADA event at the fair; she invited people to attend from noon – 6 p.m. for the next two days.

Ms. Rogers welcomed new members. She expressed appreciation for the amount of time Sen. Coghill gave to the FDC, and she stated she hopes he will speak to the group again in the future.

Vice Chair Walters asked Ms. Rogers about the issue of FDC demographics that was reported in the newspaper. **Ms. Rogers** stated that there was a great deal of discussion on the issue by the City Council, and she stated that Mayor Matherly may be able to speak more about his ideas regarding demographics.

Ms. Sanford stated that Fairbanks has an active re-entry coalition that Mr. Kelvin Lee is involved with. She stated that folks are working hard to ensure that people get help. She stated that the coalition has an online presence, and she encouraged business owners who are willing to hire people reentering society to contact the coalition. She welcomed the new FDC members.

Ms. Shepard stated that she is excited to serve on the FDC. She spoke to QPR training and stated that it is a “question, persuade, respond” program aimed at suicide prevention. She stated that she is a trainer and she could provide more information to the FDC if the group is interested.

Mr. Toelle stated that he has flyers available about the Access Alaska/Wallbusters event at the fair. He stated that he is recovering from an 8-day trip to Washington D.C.

Mr. Butler apologized for missing the last meeting due to travel. He requested to add an item to New Business at the next meeting: a presentation from a subject matter expert on the process for a claimant to go through regarding rights (EEOC-related). He asked if there was a listing of all meeting results and tasks that have been completed by the FDC since its inception. He stated that he got involved with the FDC because of the DAP.

City Clerk Snider stated that the official record of FDC is the meeting minutes. She stated that the meeting minutes are available on the City's website.

Ms. Slayton stated that for right now she is learning what is happening; she agreed with Mr. Butler that it would be nice to have a compiled overview of what has happened since the FDC's inception. She indicated that having that kind of information readily available would add more legitimacy to the FDC.

Ms. Jackson stated that she had no comments.

Ms. Borges stated that she is surrounded by new faces. She expressed hope that everyone who is no longer serving on the FDC is doing well.

Vice Chair Walters discussed future ideas and meeting topics. He stated that the QPR training may be a good topic to bring up on a future agenda. He stated that he would like to invite local high school students to a future meeting. He welcomed new members, Lisa and Heidi. He requested to add an item under Unfinished Business at the next meeting: how to be supportive of transgender issues. He stated that he will try to get in touch with Hayden Nevill and possibly Wendy Tisland from the FNSB School District. He stated that in Anchorage, a bathroom bill will go before voters at the next election. He explained that the bill would require individuals to use the restroom matching the gender on their birth certificate.

MEETING DATES

The next Regular Meeting of the FDC is scheduled for September 12, 2017.


ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Toelle, seconded by **Ms. Sanford**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Hearing no objection, **Vice Chair Walters** declared the meeting
ADJOURNED at 8:00 p.m.



Mayor Jim Matherly, Chair



D. Danyielle Spider, CMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS