



**FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 13, 2018 – 5:30 P.M.
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 Walters (Seat M) presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present:	Lisa Slayton, Seat B	Rita Davis, Seat L
	Kathryn Ottersten, Seat E	Kelvin Lee, Seat O
	Herbert Butler, Seat G	June Rogers, Councilmember (telephonic)
	Rosalind Kan, Seat H	Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director

Members Absent:	Vacant, Seat A	Douglas Toelle, Seat J (excused)
	Montean Jackson, Seat C (excused)	Vacant, Seat K
	Juanita Webb, Seat D (excused)	Amber Taylor, Seat N (excused)
	Svetlana Nuss, Seat F	Mayor Jim Matherly, Chair (excused)
	Marna Sanford, Seat I (excused)	

Also Present:	D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk	Dan Welborn, Deputy Police Chief
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CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT

Vice Chair Walters called the meeting to order; he stated that Mayor Matherly is speaking at another event. He stated that there is no quorum present, so no action can be taken. He asked Mr. Butler to read aloud the FDC mission statement. Mr. Butler read the statement aloud.

a) Welcome to New Members Kathryn Ottersten and Svetlana Nuss

Vice Chair Walters welcomed the new member present, Ms. Kathryn Ottersten. Ms. Ottersten stated she is a native of Brooklyn, New York with a great deal of experience in social justice. She spoke to her background and experiences and stated that she deliberately spent three years as a homeless person in New York so that she could remain an activist; she stated she also worked with the homeless and those with HIV. She stated she helped to change the needle exchange law in New York. Ms. Ottersten stated that she was born intersexed, and doctors made decisions without her parents' involvement when she was born. She indicated she has had to deal with some long-term consequences of that.

Vice Chair Walters and members took turns introducing themselves to Ms. Ottersten.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Walters led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Foster-Snow requested that New Business item (a) be postponed to the next meeting.

No members objected to Ms. Foster-Snow's request.

CITIZENS COMMENTS (limited to 3 minutes)

Tonya Coty, Director of Employment & Educational Opportunity at Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD) – Ms. Coty stated she is pleased to see Black History Month on the FDC agenda. She stated there were many entries by students in the Black History Month contest in the district. She stated that the FNSBSD Diversity Council held a meeting recently. She shared that the FNSBSD Board will consider a resolution to recognize International Women’s Day and Month on February 20.

Ms. Foster-Snow asked Ms. Coty if she could help the City get the word out to gain interest from local youth in serving on the FDC. Ms. Coty stated that she is willing to help. Ms. Rogers mentioned the students from West Valley who attended an FDC meeting. Ms. Foster-Snow suggested that she and Mr. Walters attend one of the student meetings at West Valley.

Vice Chair Walters asked what other months like Women’s Month are recognized by the FNSBSD. Ms. Coty stated that there are about a dozen of them, and she can get a list for the FDC.

Helen Marie Matesi – Ms. Matesi stated that there was a question about the FDC’s autonomy at the last meeting. She stated she is proud that the Fairbanks community has a diversity council, and she understands that the FDC is still in the formative stages. She expressed her personal opinion that the FDC should act in harmony with but somewhat independent of the City Council. She stated that people come to the FDC to seek help and support; she stated the City Council needs advice from the FDC. She stated that the decision on whether a request is supported needs to belong to the FDC, and the body needs the freedom to decide those things.

Hearing no more requests for comment, Vice Chair Walters declared Citizens’ Comments closed.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Ms. Kan stated the Chinese New Year event would be held on February 17 at the UAF Wood Center Ball Room with dinner at 5:30 p.m. She stated tickets are \$16 to purchase in advance.

Mr. Butler stated that the Festival of Native Arts is coming up soon. He stated that the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA), Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), and Doyon annual meetings are all approaching soon as well. He stated that information about the FNA and TCC meetings can be found on Facebook.

Ms. Slayton stated that a Fabulous Feminist Fundraiser is coming up in April, and she will bring more information to the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2017

The FDC was unable to approve the meeting minutes due to lack of a quorum.

FAIRBANKS POLICE DEPARTMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES REPORTS

Deputy Police Chief Dan Welborn reported that the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD) has 45 sworn positions, six of which are currently vacant. He stated that there are some new officers still in training, and one new hire will go to academy later in the month. He stated that a new lateral hire from Florida

will start March 1. He stated that there are three expected retirements within the department in 2018. He expressed hope that the FPD is at full staffing levels by 2020. Deputy Welborn stated that the FPD offers Comprehensive Officer Preparation Seminars (COPS) as often as possible for people looking into law enforcement as a career. He stated the seminars will be held on February 28, March 28, and April 28, and there are not many people signed up yet; he spoke to other recruitment efforts by FPD. He explained that DDACTS is data-driven approaches to crime and traffic safety, and he would like to see the program implemented at FPD; he stated the department is going to start focusing on trouble areas in Fairbanks. Deputy Welborn stated that he and Chief Jewkes continue to meet with Rodney Gaskins and Brenda McFarlane at the Fairbanks Rescue Mission to address homelessness in Fairbanks. He shared that he and Chief Jewkes hosted a recent webinar with FPD's chaplains on "Protecting Places of Worship." He stated that the partnership between chaplains, law enforcement, and churches is timely because of all the incidents that have taken place in churches nationwide.

Ms. Slayton questioned whether safety in places of worship has been an issue in Fairbanks. Deputy Welborn replied it has not been an issue, but with all the mass shootings it is a worthwhile effort.

Deputy Welborn spoke to the recent shooting of a young lady in Fairbanks. He stated it was a tragic event, but a success story came out of it. He explained that an employee of a local dance studio received a Nixle alert and was able to assist the police in apprehending the suspect. He stated that at one point, the gunman tried to enter Randy Smith Middle School, but the building was already on lockdown.

Ms. Slayton asked what proactive measures are being taken to address domestic violence issues. Deputy Welborn replied that there used to be a domestic violence program coordinator at FPD, but there no longer is. He stated that domestic violence is prevalent in Fairbanks, and those are the most dangerous calls for the FPD. He stated that with low staffing levels, the FPD is currently in reactive mode in regard to domestic violence issues. **Ms. Slayton** indicated that she would like to see more attention given to being proactive with domestic violence issues in Fairbanks. She indicated that outreach to churches is not as much of a priority in Fairbanks as the issue of domestic violence. She stated that she would like to see the prevalent problems addressed, and she would like to bring back a domestic violence coordinator.

Mr. Butler asked how the Fairbanks community is doing with substance abuse issues. Deputy Welborn stated that he does not have statistics available at the moment. He spoke to the implementation of Senate Bill 91 and to some of the problems law enforcement has experienced with it. **Mr. Butler** asked about the working relationship between the FPD, the Alaska State Troopers (AST), and the military police (MPs). Deputy Welborn stated that the FPD has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MPs; he stated that generally the FPD handles civilian issues on Fort Wainwright, and the MPs handle issues when military personnel is involved. **Mr. Butler** and Deputy Welborn spoke to MP and FPD turnover. Deputy Welborn stated the FPD has a good relationship with the military bases.

Ms. Kan spoke to domestic violence in Fairbanks and agreed that education is good place to start. She stated that the FDC and the City should find a way to recognize International Women's Day.

Vice Chair Walters spoke to helping the police force be as representative of the community as possible. He asked Deputy Welborn to address whether the department is seeing diversity in new recruits. Deputy Welborn stated that when he started at FPD, hiring groups were made up of about 200 people; he stated that now there are about 10. He remarked that the department would love it if more people would apply, and he spoke to police recruitment issues statewide. He stated that he and the Chief come to work in uniform because they need go out on calls; he stated that is not standard for command staff in most departments.

Ms. Rogers expressed concern about the image that the title of the event, "Run from the Cops" portrays. Deputy Welborn acknowledged Ms. Rogers' concern and explained what the event is all about. He stated that he could address that with Chief Jewkes.

HR Director Foster-Snow stated that things have been busy in HR. She stated the City filled an Engineer position last week and recently hired 2.5 new Dispatchers and 3 new Firefighters. She stated that the City is currently filling the Risk Management/Purchasing position and is recruiting for an Accounting Specialist and an Operator at Public Works. She stated that the City has to open the recruitment process internally first, then it may go out to the public. She stated that the City Engineer position and a Lead Mechanic position at Public Works will open in about a week.

DIVERSITY TOPIC OF THE MONTH

a) **Black History Month – Representative(s) from Fairbanks NAACP**

Benny Colbert, NAACP President, Fairbanks Chapter – Mr. Colbert thanked the FDC for the invitation to speak. He told a little about his background and about the NAACP. He stated that the organization is not a "Black" organization and explained that it is inclusive of all people. He invited folks to join the NAACP; he shared that the Executive Board meets every third Saturday, 10:00 a.m. and the general membership meets the same day at 11:30 a.m. downstairs from Fairbanks Neighborhood Housing. He spoke to the need for transparency and to the need to get word out about the organization into the community. He stated that in October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the NAACP brought up Dr. McCoy, an actress/singer who did 7-10 different caricatures of different types of domestic violence. He stated that they held events at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitor's Center and at UAF. Mr. Colbert spoke to the importance of education in helping solve the problem of domestic violence. He stated that he is tired of youth being taught by social media and stated that it is shocking that young people are fighting for causes that they know little to nothing about. He stated that many do it to feel like they belong or because someone told them to. He expressed hope that people begin knowing and understanding more about other cultures and differences. He stated that people all different, but they are all human. Mr. Colbert clarified that the February 17 NAACP meeting would be held at a different location, the Mt. McKinley Bank conference room. He spoke to the Black History Month contest at the FNSBSD and to the great participation by students throughout the district.

Ms. Kan extended to the NAACP an invitation to the International Friendship Day event held in October; she stated it would be nice to have the organization represented there. Mr. Colbert stated that he would be open to the event. He spoke about other events throughout the year that the NAACP puts on, including Juneteenth and the Freedom Fundraiser.

Mr. Butler invited Mr. Colbert to attend the Festival of Native Arts on March 1, 2, and 3. Mr. Colbert suggested that different groups coordinate an event calendar containing all the various events throughout the community. He spoke briefly to the issues of racism and inequality in the community and stated that it is time to heal and fix the problems. He stated that he would like to see high school teachers broaden what they teach because so much more history exists than what students are taught.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Appointment of Second Vice Chair** (*This item is to be discussed at the March 13 FDC meeting*)
- b) **Review of Diversity Action Plan**

Vice Chair Walters stated that Ms. Jackson had requested a review of the DAP to make sure the FDC is following it. He explained a little about the Plan and its history. He asked the group to review the six main goals of the Plan by reading them aloud.

Mr. Butler stated that he spoke with the Mayor earlier in the week. He indicated that the original purpose of FDC was to focus on discrimination in employment, and that changed with the DAP. He commented that there are many things in the Plan that require action, and he has not seen any sign-off on the items the FDC has completed. He stated he feels like the Mayor and more members need to be present in order to begin the DAP review process, and suggested that the item be tabled until the next meeting. He stated that the DAP should be the primary topic of the meeting. He indicated that he has a lot of comments and notes on the DAP.

Mr. Lee stated that most members who were around when the Plan was drafted are no longer on the FDC. He stated that it is easy to come along after the fact and pick the DAP apart. He expressed his belief that the FDC needs to accomplish things in the DAP before revising it. He commented that it would be good to review the goals of the Plan.

Mr. Butler stated that members should study the document then step into the review process. **Ms. Ottersten** commented that she reviewed the Plan and found it enormously confusing.

Ms. Davis agreed with Mr. Lee. She stated that she is an original member of the FDC and that when former Mayor Eberhart formed the FDC, he wanted to help the local government reflect the Fairbanks community. She stated that there was some chaos with the FDC at first but that it has come a long way. She stated that the group needs to start doing instead of picking the DAP apart.

Members took turns reading aloud the six goals in the DAP.

c) Committee Assignments for New Members

Ms. Ottersten indicated that she would be well-suited for the Education/Outreach Committee.

FDC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Vice Chair Walters stated that he and Mayor Matherly were the only ones who attended the last Education/Outreach Committee meeting.

Mr. Butler stated that the Policies and Procedures Committee had planned to meet for three weeks in a row, but the question arose as to what the FDC's goals were. He stated that the group wanted to wait until the DAP was addressed by the FDC before digging back in to policies and procedures. He stated that the group hopes to come back to the FDC with some suggestions.

FDC MEMBERS COMMENTS

Mr. Lee welcomed the new members and stated that he has been travelling a lot. He commented that he enjoys being a part of FDC, and he wants the group to stay on target. He stated that he likes that the FDC was started to make more fair situations for people.

Ms. Slayton thanked new members joining the FDC. She distributed a handout on terms relating to the gender spectrum and another on domestic violence in Alaska. She stated that she brought other Southern Poverty Law Center magazines and newspapers that are free for anyone to take.

Mr. Butler stated that he read the thick handout on Alaska Natives that Ms. Slayton brought to the last meeting. He stated it was a compilation of essays and such written by the scholarly. He stated that the piece indicated that the primary focus of Alaska Natives is to preserve their culture. He stated he felt the handout wrongly stated the makeup of Alaska Native traditions. He spoke to Alaska Native cultural traditions that continue and stated that the culture is teaching its people how to succeed in the cash economy. He stated that point was missed in the handout. He stated that Alaska Natives are intent on training each other, and there are a lot of highly-trained and highly-skilled Alaska Natives.

Ms. Kan stated that the FDC touched on important topics at the meeting. She stated that she hopes to see International Women's Day and the DAP on the next meeting agenda.

Ms. Foster-Snow welcomed Ms. Ottersten to the FDC.

Ms. Davis stated she is happy to be back.

Ms. Ottersten stated she is looking forward to learning. She stated that nowhere in the DAP is there anything about showing the rest of the world how diverse Fairbanks is. She stated that Fairbanks is a great place to live and that people who live in Fairbanks should be proud of their community; she stated that Fairbanks should let the rest of the country know about it.

Vice Chair Walters thanked Mr. Colbert for attending the meeting. He stated that he attended the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, and it was wonderful to see the Alaska Native dancers at the event.

Ms. Rogers spoke to Fairbanks being a welcoming place. *(Much of her comments were inaudible).*

MEETING DATES

- a) Consideration of Diversity Council Regular Meeting Date *(This item was not discussed)*
- b) Next Meeting Date, March 13, 2018

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Walters declared the meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.



Mayor Jim Matherly, Chair



D. Danyielle Snider, CMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS