



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 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 Mayor Jim Matherly presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present: Lisa Slayton, Seat B
Montean Jackson, Seat C
Juanita Webb, Seat D
Kathryn Ottersten, Seat E
Svetlana Nuss, Seat F
Herbert Butler, Seat G
Rosalind Kan, Seat H
Marna Sanford, Seat I
Douglas Toelle, Seat J
Rita Davis, Seat L (left at 7 p.m.)
Jeff Walters, Seat M
Kelvin Lee, Seat O (telephonic)
June Rogers, Councilmember
Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director

Members Absent: Vacant, Seat A
Vacant, Seat K
Amber Taylor, Seat N (excused)

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk Eric Jewkes, Chief of Police

CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT

Chair Matherly welcomed new member, Svetlana Nuss, and asked her to introduce herself. Ms. Nuss spoke briefly about her background and stated that working with children is her passion. She expressed appreciation for having been appointed to the FDC.

Chair Matherly read aloud the FDC mission statement. He thanked FDC members for carrying the torch when he is unavailable to attend meetings. He stated that he recently spent some time thinking about the FDC and reviewing its original, enacting ordinance. He stated he will share some of his thoughts about future goals later in the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Matherly led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)

Helen Marie Matesi – Ms. Matesi stated that the League of Women Voters will be holding a workshop in April on how to run for local office.

Hearing no more requests for comment, **Chair Matherly** declared Citizens' Comments closed.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mr. Butler stated that Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) meetings are ongoing and will continue through Thursday. He stated that they Doyon Limited Annual Meeting will be on Friday.

Ms. Sanford stated that the Denakkanaaga fundraiser will take place on Wednesday evening at the Tribal Hall, and TCC will have its annual potlatch on Thursday evening. She shared that Saturday night the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) will have a potlatch and a pageant.

Mr. Butler shared that Ms. Poldine Carlo recently celebrated her 97th birthday. **Mr. Walters** reminded everyone to wear green on Saturday in observance of Saint Patrick's Day.

Ms. Slayton shared that there would be a Fabulous Feminist Fundraiser in April; **Ms. Sanford** stated the event would take place on April 21.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2017
- b) Regular Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2018

Mr. Toelle, seconded by **Mr. Butler**, moved to APPROVE the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2017 and February 13, 2018.

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

FAIRBANKS POLICE DEPARTMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES REPORTS

Ms. Foster-Snow stated that there are three vacancies at the City: two data management clerk positions at the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD) and one payroll clerk position in the Finance Department. She encouraged members to share the information with anyone who may be interested in applying. She stated that the City Engineer position opened internally, and there were internal applicants; she stated that the process will continue, and the Mayor will decide whether to make a selection from the internal applicants or to open the position to the public. **Ms. Foster-Snow** reported that three new emergency dispatchers have been hired and placed within the last few weeks, and the City also hired a new Risk Manager/Purchasing Agent.

Chief Jewkes stated that the two newest hires at FPD are in training, one in field training and one in the academy. He stated that three officers are about to complete field training, and he is excited to add new patrol staff. He shared that Lieutenant Jim Geier recently retired after 25 years of service. He stated that there has been a lot of shifting at FPD recently with retirements and promotions.

Mr. Walters reminded FDC members that they have a place at the table for FPD interviews. Chief Jewkes stated that Tyrone Oates and Rodney Gaskins participated in the last lieutenant promotion panel.

Mr. Walters asked Chief Jewkes about the status of the cold cases at FPD. Chief Jewkes stated that Cold Case Detective Peyton Merideth has been promoted, and a new detective will be hired to fill the cold case position. He stated that the primary responsibility of the position is to work on cold cases, but it is sometimes needed to work on other cases such as active homicides.

Ms. Ottersten asked about the turnout for COPS seminars and about the overall staffing levels at FPD. Chief Jewkes replied that there is not typically a tremendous turnout for the seminars, and he is unsure about the turnout at the last one. He stated that depending on the success of the fall hiring process, the department may see some overall gains in staffing in 2018. He indicated that the FPD may not be fully staffed until 2021.

Chair Matherly spoke about his recent ride-along with FPD, and he encouraged FDC members to participate in a hiring panel or go through the FPD citizen's academy.

Ms. Kan stated that at the last meeting, Deputy Chief Welborn mentioned that October is domestic violence awareness month. She spoke to the importance of education surrounding domestic violence issues and asked whether the FPD is doing anything to create awareness. Chief Jewkes stated that domestic violence issues require a holistic approach and a multi-faceted solution. He indicated that a large part of the solution is enforcement. He stated that prevention and aftercare is also a large part of addressing domestic violence issues. **Ms. Kan** asked for ideas on what could be done to raise awareness. Chief Jewkes recommended inviting someone from the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living to come in; he stated that they have been involved with the "Green Dot" program, an intervention program that encourages people to take action against violence.

Ms. Rogers stated that the FDC hosted a speaker for the Green Dot program a few years ago, but it would be good to do it again since the FDC membership has changed so much. She made a suggestion to Chief Jewkes about forming some sort of ambassador group of retired police officers in Fairbanks who could help with community outreach.

Ms. Slayton handed out statistics showing Alaska at the bottom of the barrel in regard to sexual assaults and domestic violence; she asked about a domestic violence coordinator position at FPD. Chief Jewkes stated that more than a decade ago FPD had a domestic violence grant, and there was one officer assigned to follow up on domestic violence crimes. He stated that the department no longer has that position. He spoke to how domestic violence cases are handled by law enforcement. **Ms. Slayton** stated that given the statistics, domestic violence and sexual assault issues should be a priority at FPD, and the department should have a domestic violence coordinator. She stated that it appears the department is not on top of the issue. Chief Jewkes stated that FPD does its best to address competing priorities, and there is a constant triage of what gets done.

Ms. Ottersten asked if crime statistics for the City of Fairbanks are available online. Chief Jewkes replied that statistics are not available by neighborhood, but the department may be able

to provide statistics by geographic area. He stated that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) maintains a master list called Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) which is available to the public. **Ms. Rogers** suggested that information about the FBI's UCR be made available to citizens.

DIVERSITY TOPIC OF THE MONTH

a) Film Presentation by Heather Damaro and Yuki Nagaoka

Mr. Walters introduced Ms. Damaro and spoke of her accomplishments as an educator. He stated that two West Valley Students, Yuki Nagaoka and Sydney Cox, created an award-winning documentary about the history of racism in the United States. He stated the students presented the film at the National Museum of African American History & Culture in Washington D.C. in the Oprah Winfrey Theater.

Ms. Nagaoka stated that Ms. Cox was her partner in the project but could not be present. She stated that when they started looking for a topic, they wanted to center it around a female musician who had an impact on American History. She stated that in their freshman year, a teacher played a recording of the song "Strange Fruit" by Billie Holiday, and the song stuck with them. Ms. Nagaoka stated that the powerful song reached many people, even after Ms. Holiday stopped performing. She stated that the documentary she and Ms. Cox created passed through the regional and state levels, and finally the national level where they won the National History Day African American History award. She spoke about the awarding experience of presenting the film at the National Museum of African American History & Culture in Washington D.C.

Chair Matherly thanked Ms. Nagaoka for the presentation. **Mr. Butler** commented that racism is still occurring. **Chair Matherly** stated that everyone has experienced discrimination, but he would like to believe that it has improved. He stated that respect starts in the family. **Ms. Rogers** agreed that racism still exists; she stated that the film is a good reminder that tragedies still happen every day. She stated that people need to be a help instead of allowing bad things to happen.

Ms. Nagaoka stated that jazz found a big place in culture in the 1930s and 1940s. She stated that Ms. Holiday took her experiences, put them into mainstream culture, and took a stand. **Ms. Ottersten** commended and thanked Ms. Nagaoka and stated that it was an impressive film. She stated that the song itself has a history since it was written by a Jewish man whose parents were discriminated against. She stated that the impact of such a song is widespread because it carries with it so much truth. Ms. Nagaoka pointed out that the song is additionally unique because the writer, Abel Meeropol, was a Jewish school teacher who was also a Communist, and the song was first recorded by an African-American woman.

Ms. Nagaoka and members discussed how jazz music impacted American history. When asked how the film was created, Ms. Nagaoka stated that they used the free program, iMovie, to create the documentary. She stated that they did a film analysis their junior year, and they tried to mimic the patterns they saw; she added that they also tried to match the narrative to the visuals.

Ms. Damaro expressed appreciation for the invite by the FDC. She spoke to racial discrimination and stated people experience different levels of discrimination. She stated that the

things the students had to learn and see when working on the project were very taxing. Ms. Damario spoke about their visit to the National Museum of African American History & Culture in Washington D.C. and stated that when they reached the Obama section at the museum, they all three became emotional because of the entire experience. She stated she knew in that moment that the documentary was more than just a history day project to the young ladies.

Ms. Slayton stated that she was impressed with the girls' work. She agreed that there are varying levels of discrimination, and she expressed hope that this generation does not allow things to be glossed over. She stated they need to hold people's feet to the fire.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Appointment of Second Vice Chair

Chair Matherly asked members if there were any nominations or volunteers for the position of Second Vice Chair. **Mr. Butler** indicated that he would like to volunteer, and there were no other nominations or volunteers.

Chair Matherly asked for a show of hands of those in favor of confirming **Mr. Butler's** appointment to Second Vice Chair; the show of hands confirming the appointment was unanimous.

b) Review of Diversity Action Plan

Chair Matherly stated the discussion at the last meeting instigated his review of the enacting ordinance of the FDC and the Diversity Action Plan (DAP). He stated that he does not want to unpack the entire DAP, but he would like members to provide feedback on the goals they would like the FDC to accomplish in the next year or so.

Mr. Walters stated he would like to review the DAP to make sure that the FDC is on track. He stated that he and Ms. Ottersten recently spoke about the Plan at the Education/Outreach Committee meeting, and they agreed that outreach to Explore Fairbanks is missing from the DAP. He stated it would be good to market Fairbanks as a great place to live.

Ms. Jackson suggested looking at the DAP at the committee level and consider changing items as they come up. She commented that the FDC should look at the DAP at least once per year. **Chair Matherly** stated that the ordinance states that the DAP will be reviewed at least once every five years.

Mr. Butler stated that he would like to see a change pertaining to the Policy & Procedure Committee. He explained that the meetings have been poorly attended, and he feels that instead of digging into City policies and procedures, the group should bring issues forward on a case-by-case basis. He indicated that he would like to dissolve the committee and only meet on an as-needed basis. He stated it is difficult for the committee to not only review City policies, but also come up with recommendations and assessments. **Mr. Lee** stated that he thought the committee was just supposed to ensure that proper hiring policies were in place at the City; he stated that he did not see a purpose in getting rid of the committee.

Mr. Butler again spoke to poor attendance at committee meetings. He stated that the committee found that there is not a real path to follow to produce something for the FDC to consider. He stated he understands one of the main purposes of the FDC is to look at hiring practices in local government; he stated if there is not a problem he does not see a need to continue.

Ms. Jackson stated that poor attendance is not necessarily a reason to disband a committee. She questioned the assumption that the FDC as a body is satisfied with the hiring practices at the City of Fairbanks. She stated that although she has made requests, she has not seen any statistical reports from the City relating to diversity in its hiring and training practices. **Chair Matherly** stated that the City is not able to require demographic information from job applicants. **Ms. Jackson** stated that the FDC should have some sort of idea – maybe on an annual reporting basis – of the statistics of diverse recruitment at the City. She stated she is unsure if hiring five more police officers that look like the Mayor says “diversity.” **Ms. Slayton** stated that the FDC does not need to hear about vacancies and staffing levels at the FPD; rather, the FDC needs to hear reports relating to diversity in hiring.

Ms. Sanford stated she understands FDC members are busy people; she expressed frustration that she has chaired the Policy & Procedure Committee for nearly a year with no progress. She stated that she feels that the work of the committee should be done by the FDC as a body.

Ms. Ottersten indicated that there is a lot of work in the DAP to be done.

Mr. Butler stated it is extremely difficult to modify a policy once it is in place.

Chair Matherly asked the DAP to allow him some time to consider some of the suggestions and recommendations with his staff; he indicated that he would like to give more thought to the Policy & Procedure Committee before striking it. He stated that FPD has struggled to develop a diverse work force because there is not much diversity amongst applicants. He commented that the question is how to increase diversity in the hiring pool. He took exception to **Ms. Jackson’s** comment that all the newly-hired police officers look like him. **Ms. Jackson** stated that she meant no disrespect; she clarified that she was trying to be more diplomatic than just saying that it appears the FPD hires only Caucasian males.

Ms. Sanford suggested that there be a section on each meeting agenda to look at policy.

Chair Matherly stated that he would like members to send items they feel should be prioritized to **Ms. Foster-Snow**. He stated that the City’s complete policy manual is still a work in progress.

Ms. Rogers stated that there has not been much input from the Borough until recently. She stated that the FDC should look at its relationship with the Borough and explore where responsibilities lie.

c) Committee Assignment for New Member

Chair Matherly asked **Ms. Nuss** to consider which committee she would like to serve on, and let him know.

FDC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Butler stated that after the FDC decides on a path to follow for the Policies & Procedures Committee, the Borough should be contacted because they have had representation at committee meetings.

Mr. Toelle stated that the Accessibility Committee has also had poor attendance. He stated the group will soon be talking with the City about snow removal prioritization for accessibility purposes. He stated that the committee may make some recommendations soon.

FDC MEMBERS COMMENTS

Ms. Webb stated that she had no comments.

Ms. Sanford mentioned House Bill 184 currently in the state legislature. She stated it is the first time an anti-discrimination bill has passed out of a committee; she stated that the bill would prohibit discrimination on LGBTQ issues. She encouraged members to weigh in on the bill. She spoke to March being Women's History Month and to the many pioneers who have come before. She invited everyone to the TCC potlatch on Thursday evening at the David Salmon Tribal Hall.

Ms. Jackson thanked everyone for the card following the recent passing of her mother. She stated that she would like to see regular legislative updates during Committee Reports on items that impact the FDC. She indicated that she would like to see military involvement in the FDC since military personnel make up a significant part of the community.

Mr. Butler stated that time and again at TCC meetings, there is a major concern within the Native community on a statewide basis that law enforcement is lacking in rural communities. He stated that when law enforcement is needed, oftentimes law enforcement shows up too late or not at all. **Mr. Butler** stated that there is difficulty in filling Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) positions, and expressed his belief that it is virtually impossible for the City to hire a Native police officer because the VPSOs would almost certainly hire them first. He mentioned that the Alaska State Troopers (AST) are also undermanned.

Ms. Kan spoke to recognizing International Women's Day and stated that she is glad there is a whole month to celebrate women's history. She suggested inviting someone to an FDC meeting to speak about International Women's Day and how the day is celebrated.

Mr. Toelle stated that he just returned from Washington D.C. He commented that it would be nice to have a section in the agenda to discuss legislative issues. He spoke briefly to the expansion of his personal business.

Ms. Slayton stated that Ms. Kan did a wonderful job with the Chinese New Year event. She commented that it would be good to get in touch with people involved with a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) group and let them know that the FDC exists. **Chair Matherly** stated that he would look into it.

Ms. Ottersten stated that she had no comments.

Ms. Rogers stated that the discussion at the meeting has been wonderful.

Ms. Nuss asked where she would share information about an event. **Chair Matherly** replied that she could send the information to Ms. Foster-Snow.

Chair Matherly stated that Mr. Lee had to hang up and is no longer on the telephone.

Mr. Walters welcomed Ms. Nuss. He stated that he recently attended a dance put on by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and it was a good event. He stated he also attended a Festival of Native Arts (FNA) event where a proclamation by the three local mayors was read recognizing March 1 as "Festival of Native Arts Day." He stated that he would try to contact representatives from the Green Dot program and possibly Explore Fairbanks; he spoke to the importance of getting the word out into the community about the FDC. **Ms. Rogers** suggested contacting Charity Gadapee with Explore Fairbanks. **Mr. Walters** thanked Ms. Damario and Ms. Nagaoka for the presentation.

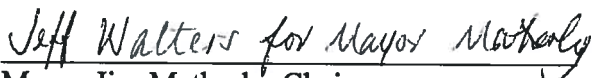
MEETING DATES

a) Next Meeting Date, April 10, 2018

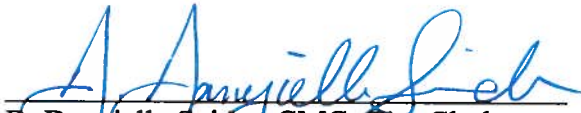
ADJOURNMENT

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

Hearing no objection, **Chair Matherly** declared the meeting
ADJOURNED at 7:54 p.m.



Mayor Jim Matherly, Chair



D. Danyielle Snider, CMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS