



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 8, 2019 – 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:     Zee Nace, Seat A                             Sara Harriger, Seat K  
                              Lisa Slayton, Seat B                             Rita Davis, Seat L  
                              Shelissa Thomas, Seat E                             Jeff Walters, Seat M  
                              David Rucker, Seat G                             June Rogers, Councilmember  
                              Stephen Greenlaw, Seat I (telephonic)

Members Absent:     Montean Jackson, Seat C (excused)             Douglas Toelle, Seat J (excused)  
                              Juanita Webb, Seat D (excused)             Vacant, Seat N  
                              Svetlana Nuss, Seat F                             Kelvin Lee, Seat O (excused)  
                              Rosalind Kan, Seat H (excused)             Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director (excused)

Also Present:         D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk             Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff

**CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT**

Chair Matherly called the meeting to order. He welcomed new member, Shelissa Thomas, and read the FDC Mission Statement.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Matherly led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Walters, seconded by Ms. Slayton, moved to APPROVE the Agenda. There was no objection to the approval of the agenda.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)**

Mike Meeks, City of Fairbanks Chief of Staff – Mr. Meeks stated that part of his role as Chief of Staff to the Mayor is to look at things from a public relations (PR) perspective. He stated that the FDC has a resolution on the agenda regarding City Ordinance No. 6093. He stated that if the FDC approves the resolution, the Mayor, as the FDC Chair, will sign the resolution before it is presented to the City Council. He stated that by signing the resolution it may appear to the public that Mayor Matherly has already made up his mind about Ordinance No. 6093, and it may appear as though he is shut off to public input. He stated that the City Council is holding Work Sessions throughout

the week to discuss Ordinance No. 6093, and they are still gathering input on the ordinance. He asked the FDC to be cognizant of that potential PR issue.

Members discussed the issue briefly. **Ms. Harriger** indicated that the FDC resolution could be a great opportunity for the Mayor to showcase the FDC; she commented that perhaps the group could put some language in the resolution pointing out that the Mayor is a non-voting member of the FDC. It was clarified that Ms. Rogers is also a non-voting member.

**Ms. Rogers** commented that there is an opportunity for education and that the Borough needs to know about the activities of the FDC.

**Ms. Slayton** stated that she hopes the FDC will revisit the issue of whether the Mayor should be the Chair of the FDC. **Chair Matherly** stated that he discussed that very issue recently with Ms. Jackson and Ms. Harriger; he added that he wants to be careful not to damage the FDC or the City Council. **Ms. Harriger** agreed that it would be an interesting topic to put on the agenda for a future meeting and indicated that she is unaware of the history behind the Mayor serving as the Chair of the FDC. In response to Ms. Rogers' comments regarding the Borough, **Ms. Harriger** stated that Mayor Matherly has a meeting with the Borough Mayor on Thursday and that he could discuss the FDC with Mayor Ward at that time.

Kathryn Dodge, 665 8th Avenue, Fairbanks – Ms. Dodge stated that she is a member of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (CHR), and she has been intending to attend an FDC meeting for some time although her schedule has not allowed it. She stated that she believes the FDC and the CHR have similar missions about educating businesses and individuals on human rights laws. She spoke to the role and authority of the CHR and to the process it follows in investigating claims of discrimination. She stated that in listening to the discussion on Ordinance No. 6093, she has been struck by the misinformation about and distrust of the CHR. She stated she is hopeful that the CHR Executive Director will have more of a presence in Fairbanks as the ordinance moves forward. She expressed support for the ordinance and stated she is happy the community is having the conversation.

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

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Chair Matherly**, on behalf of Vice Chair Jackson, shared that there would be a community celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 18 and 19. He stated that the celebration would be at the Corinthian Baptist Church on January 18 at 7 p.m., and there would be a youth breakfast at 10 a.m. on Saturday at the JP Jones Community Center. **Mr. Walters** stated that he has attended the events in the past and encouraged people to attend.

**Mr. Rucker** stated that the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD) and the NAACP will be doing an essay and art contest in February and stated that they are rolling out the project this month in schools. He shared that on January 9 there will be a special Diversity Committee (DC) meeting regarding a School Board equity policy which would ensure that resources are allocated appropriately; he stated that the DC is reviewing the policy for the Board.

**Ms. Slayton** asked when the Women’s March would take place. **Ms. Dodge** stated that she believed the event would take place no January 19, but she was not sure of the location.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2018

**Ms. Davis**, seconded by **Ms. Nace**, moved to APPROVE the Meeting Minutes.

**Ms. Harriger** asked that page 3 of the minutes be amended by striking “accomplish things” in the third paragraph from the bottom and replacing with “provide social services.” No members objected to the change.

**Chair Matherly** called for objection to APPROVING the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2018, as Amended and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT**

**Chair Matherly** shared that **Ms. Foster-Snow** is not present, and there would be no HR report.

### **DIVERSITY TOPIC OF THE MONTH**

**Ms. Harriger** reported that she, **Ms. Jackson**, and **Mayor Matherly** recently met and discussed getting the list of diversity topics the FDC put together and scheduling topics to be discussed for the year. She stated that they also talked the request to invite **Chief Jewkes** to attend the February meeting to discuss closed cases.

**Mr. Walters** requested that “**Mayor Matherly’s** upcoming meeting with Borough Mayor” be added to the agenda under New Business. No members objected.

**Ms. Nace** shared that her high school unit team recently took all the titles in the “**We the People**” competition, a government class provided by some local schools. She stated that the class goes in depth with the U. S. Constitution, and students participate in congressional hearings.

**Ms. Rogers** stated that the FDC agenda used to contain an item for a report from the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD). She asked whether a representative from the FPD could resume attending FDC meetings. **Chair Matherly** replied that he has directed **Chief Jewkes** to resume attending starting in February.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

a) Diversity Council Input on City Council Action Items

i) Resolution No. 4846 (recommendation from the Education/Outreach Committee; FDC Resolution No. 2019-02 and Letter to the City Council)

**Mr. Walters**, seconded by **Ms. Nace**, moved to APPROVE FDC Resolution No. 2019-02.

Members discussed the difference between the weight of a letter versus a resolution and which document may be more appropriate to submit to the City Council. The resolution and letter encourage the City Council to consult with the FDC prior to taking action on items that may impact the reputation and well-being of the community and its diverse members. **Ms. Harriger** recommended the letter format for this particular issue; she indicated that a letter is more of an invitation for communication. She spoke to the process in drafting the letter. **Mr. Walters** read aloud the last sentence in the letter. He stated that he likes the sentiment, which does not makes demands, but requests that the FDC be included and brought to the table.

Members discussed the issue at length. **Chair Matherly** stated that every ordinance and resolution that comes before the City Council will not be brought before the FDC. He spoke to ways of strengthening the relationship between the two bodies.

**Ms. Thomas** stated that the letter is encouraging, but it seems to her that the point of a resolution is to make it absolute. **Ms. Harriger** stated that a resolution is more formal and demands action; she stated that the letter is softer and less formal. She commented that the letter could open up a conversation about the issue, and a resolution could be presented at a later time if it becomes a regular problem.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE FDC RESOLUTION NO. 2019-02 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: None  
NAYS: Rucker, Nace, Walters, Slayton, Harriger, Davis, Greenlaw, Thomas  
**Chair Matherly** declared the MOTION FAILED.

**Mr. Walters**, seconded by **Ms. Nace**, moved to APPROVE the letter to the City Council regarding communications between the City Council and the FDC.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE LETTER TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE FDC AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rucker, Nace, Walters, Slayton, Harriger, Davis, Greenlaw, Thomas  
NAYS: None  
**Chair Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- ii) Ordinance No. 6093 (recommendation from the Accessibility Committee; FDC Resolution No. 2019-01 and letter to the City Council)

**Ms. Harriger**, seconded by **Ms. Nace**, moved to APPROVE FDC Resolution No. 2019-01.

**Ms. Harriger** stated she feels strongly that this action should be passed as a resolution. In regard to Chief of Staff Mike Meeks' earlier comments, she stated she does not want the resolution to interfere with the Mayor's public relations, so perhaps the FDC could add some language in regard to that.

**Ms. Slayton** spoke against the FDC supporting any type of religious exemption language in City Ordinance No. 6093. **Mr. Rucker** spoke about not recommending language that would abridge state and federal law; he stated that the state and federal laws may be vague, but there is a lot of case law behind them. He indicated that the City ordinance is a good starting point in regard to the issue of equality.

Members debated the language in the "Now, therefore..." portion of Resolution No. 2019-01 pertaining to the religious exemption language in City Ordinance No. 6093.

**Mr. Walters**, seconded by **Ms. Harriger**, moved to AMEND FDC Resolution NO. 2019-01 by striking the last sentence in the "Now, therefore..." paragraph.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND FDC RESOLUTION NO. 2019-01 BY STRIKING THE LAST SENTENCE IN THE "NOW, THEREFORE..." PARAGRAPH AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: None

NAYS: Rucker, Nace, Walters, Slayton, Harriger, Davis, Greenlaw, Thomas  
**Chair Matherly** declared the MOTION FAILED.

**Ms. Harriger**, seconded by **Ms. Nace**, moved to AMEND FDC Resolution No. 2019-01 by striking the last sentence in the "Now, therefore..." paragraph and by rewording the second whereas to read, "Whereas, it is our understanding that no City ordinance can abridge any state or federal constitutional protections for freedom of religion and that existing federal law strongly protects the rights of religious institutions in this regard. Related case law shows that religious schools are also protected as instruments of the church."

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE ABOVE MOTION TO AMEND FDC RESOLUTION NO. 2019-01 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rucker, Nace, Walters, Slayton, Harriger, Davis, Greenlaw, Thomas

NAYS: None

**Chair Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Mr. Walters**, seconded by **Ms. Slayton**, moved to AMEND FDC Resolution 2019-01 by adding a paragraph following the "Now, therefore..." paragraph to read, "Be it further resolved that the Fairbanks Diversity Council recommends that the definition of 'employer' in Ordinance No. 6093, as Amended, be amended by changing the number of employees from 15 to 4."

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE ABOVE MOTION TO AMEND FDC RESOLUTION NO. 2019-01 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rucker, Nace, Walters, Slayton, Harriger, Davis, Greenlaw

NAYS: Thomas

**Chair Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Ms. Harriger**, seconded by **Ms. Nace**, moved to AMEND FDC Resolution No. 2019-01 by adding language at the end of the final sentence to read, "...in the presence of non-voting, ex-officio members, City Council Member June Rogers and Mayor Jim Matherly."

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE ABOVE MOTION TO AMEND FDC RESOLUTION NO. 2019-01 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rucker, Nace, Walters, Slayton, Harriger, Davis, Greenlaw, Thomas

NAYS: None

**Chair Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Ms. Rogers** requested that all references to the "FDC" and to the "City Council" throughout Resolution No. 2019-01 be consistent (Fairbanks Diversity Council and City Council). The Clerk noted the request.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE FDC RESOLUTION NO. 2019-01, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rucker, Nace, Walters, Slayton, Harriger, Davis, Greenlaw, Thomas

NAYS: None

**Chair Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED and FDC Resolution No. 2019-01, as Amended, APPROVED.

## NEW BUSINESS

- a) Mayor Matherly's upcoming meeting with Borough Mayor

**Chair Matherly** clarified that the upcoming meeting is a regularly-scheduled meeting with the Borough Mayor and the North Pole Mayor. He stated that the FDC is not the only topic that will be discussed but that he would certainly bring up the FDC with the Borough Mayor.

**Mr. Walters** expressed confusion about his role as a Borough-appointed member of the FDC. He asked whether Borough Code addresses the FDC. **Chair Matherly** asked former Borough Assembly Member Kathryn Dodge to come up and speak in response to Mr. Walters' question.

Ms. Dodge spoke to how the process of appointing Borough representatives to the FDC. She stated that she does not believe there is a tight relationship between the Borough and the FDC beyond the appointments. She recommended that Mr. Walters contact the Deputy Presiding Officer of the Assembly or the Borough Clerk's Office to request a work session with the Assembly to brief them about the FDC. She stated that Mr. Walters could also speak to the Assembly under citizens comments at an Assembly meeting.

**Mr. Walters** asked whether Mayor Ward is aware of the FDC and whether it might be valuable for him to schedule a time to meet with Mayor Ward to discuss the FDC. **Chair Matherly** assured Mr. Walters that he would speak with Mayor Ward about the FDC.

Ms. Dodge pointed out that the Borough does not have health and social service powers, so its ability to play in that arena is very limited.

### **FDC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

There were no Committee reports.

### **FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Mr. Greenlaw** briefly commented, but there was a poor telephone connection; his comments were inaudible.

**Ms. Davis** stated that she had no comments.

**Mr. Rucker** stated that he had no comments.

**Ms. Rogers** stated that there is an opportunity for Mayor Matherly to share information about the FDC with the North Pole Mayor as well at the upcoming Mayor's meeting.

**Ms. Thomas** thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on the FDC. She stated that she would do her best to keep up.

**Ms. Harriger** welcomed Ms. Thomas. She thanked everyone for all the work the FDC put in on the recommendations to the City Council; she stated she is proud of the FDC.

**Ms. Nace** stated that it was a great meeting.

**Mr. Walters** welcomed Ms. Thomas and thanked Sara for her work on the documents provided on the agenda. He mentioned some future FDC agenda items: the Open Meetings Act (OMA), the Mayor's role in the FDC, and a review of the Diversity Action Plan (DAP).

**Ms. Slayton** stated that it was a good meeting, and it was good to talk through things. She welcomed Ms. Thomas.

Kathryn Dodge announced that the Women's March would take place on Saturday, January 19, starting at 11:00 a.m. at Ryan Middle School.

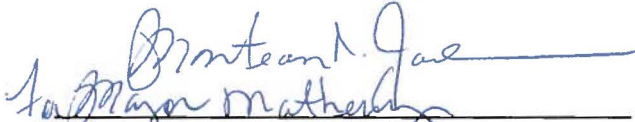
### **MEETING DATES**


The next Regular Meeting of the Fairbanks Diversity Council is scheduled for February 12, 2019.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Thomas**, seconded by **Ms. Nace**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Hearing no objection, **Chair Matherly** declared the meeting  
ADJOURNED at 7:29 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Matherly, Mayor/Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
D. Danyielle Snider, CMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS