



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
NOVEMBER 14, 2023, 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.
HELD VIA [ZOOM WEBINAR](#) AND AT
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



FDC MISSION STATEMENT: The City of Fairbanks recognizes that our community is a diverse one, with a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and orientations and recognizes this diversity as an asset and resource for our community. The establishment of a Fairbanks Diversity Council can provide the City Council and Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly with advice and recommendations to promote equal opportunity for all members of the public.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: We respectfully acknowledge the Dena people upon whose traditional lands we reside. We honor the Dena who have been the stewards of Interior lands and waters for centuries, the Elders who lived here before, the Dena people of today, and future generations to come. We also recognize that Alaskan Native people would traditionally gather here and harvest Native foods.

1. CALL TO ORDER (Reading of Mission Statement and Land Acknowledgement)
2. ROLL CALL
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES
 - a) Regular Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2023
6. CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)
7. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR
 - a) Members' Definitions of Diversity
8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - a) International Friendship Day Follow-up
9. NEW BUSINESS
 - a) Fairbanks Diversity Council "About Us" Statement
10. FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS
11. MEETING DATES
 - a) Next Regular Meeting Date, December 12, 2023
12. ADJOURNMENT



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023, 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.



HELD VIA [ZOOM WEBINAR](#) AND AT
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

The **Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC)** met on the above date to conduct a Regular Meeting via Zoom Webinar and at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska. **Chair Juanita Webb** (Seat D) was present (P), and the following members were also in attendance [Z = Zoom; P = In Person]:

Members Present: (P) Timothy Ledna, Seat A (P) Karen Blackburn, Seat I (at 5:42 pm)
(P) Richard Basarab, Seat B (P) Roscoe Britton, Seat J (at 5:46 pm)
(P) Jonathan Bagwill, Seat G (P) June Rogers, Council Member

Members Absent: Jazzanne Gordon Fretwell, Seat C Rachael Kvapil, Seat K (excused)
Shelissa Thomas, Seat E Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director
Dorothy Shockley, Seat F (excused) David Pruhs, Mayor (excused)
Vacant, Seat H

Also Present: (P) D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk (P) Jessica Krier, HR Generalist

At 5:30 p.m., **Chair Webb** noted that there was no quorum. She asked guest speaker Scott McCrea to come forward and give his presentation to the FDC.

Clerk Note: Agenda items were taken out of order and are recorded here in the order they were taken up during the meeting.

GUEST SPEAKER

- a) Scott McCrea, CEO/President of Explore Fairbanks speaking on diversity as an industry leader

S. McCrea introduced himself and gave a brief background about his experience with Explore Fairbanks. He spoke about Fairbanks as the *Golden Heart City*, a diverse and welcoming community. He discussed how Explore Fairbanks approaches diversity in its marketing and international operations and work culture. He stated that the Alaska Native culture has always been an important part of Explore Fairbanks, and two years ago they worked with Denakkanaaga to create a land acknowledgement, which they now open meetings with. S. McCrea spoke to the importance of not only understanding other cultures but sharing our culture with those who visit. He stated that there is a social responsibility when it comes to diversity, but there is also a business aspect and that if Fairbanks is going to call itself the *Golden Heart City*, it needs to demonstrate that in some way. He stated that Explore Fairbanks tries to showcase the community's diversity within its publications and website. He indicated that people visiting from underserved populations want to see that Fairbanks is a place where they will belong. S. McCrea spoke about how Explore Fairbanks developed a set of core values, and diversity is among those values. He read aloud a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement the Explore Fairbanks Board of Directors included in its strategic plan and commented that it is a good and broad statement. He spoke to

the importance of making employees feel welcome and accepted in their workplace, and he gave an example about an experience with an employee who was transitioning and wanted to be identified by their pronouns. He stated that one of the ways Explore Fairbanks showed its support was by allowing employees to add their preferred pronouns to their email signature. He mentioned that the organization also participated in a wonderful diversity training with Rodney Gaskins. In regard to marketing, S. McCrea stated that Explore Fairbanks casts as wide a net as possible, and it recognizes the various groups that are celebrated in different months throughout the year; he pointed out the importance of making those efforts genuine. He stated that in June, Explore Fairbanks acknowledged Pride Month, which was a somewhat controversial endeavor, although the positive feedback outweighed the negative. He spoke to the business aspect of the issue and stated that some of the highest spending travelers in the U.S. are a part of the LGBTQ community. He reiterated that people want to belong and be accepted. He stated he is almost ashamed to say that he has not attended an FDC meeting before, and he acknowledged that there is room for improvement in working with other local groups and organizations. He thanked FDC members for their work.

A quorum was reached at 5:47 p.m.

J. Bagwill stated he appreciates that S. McCrea came to speak about how the FDC and Explore Fairbanks can work together.

J. Rogers stated that the phrase *Golden Heart City* gets used over and over and pointed out that Fairbanks citizens have responsibilities to help Fairbanks live up to that name. She stated that people need to regularly visit and understand how they can make others feel welcomed, and that cannot be accomplished without good community connections.

R. Basarab asked S. McCrea about Explore Fairbanks' position on wheelchair accessibility in Fairbanks. S. McCrea replied that help is needed in that area. **R. Basarab** added that there have been some improvements, but there is room for more. S. McCrea stated that issue needs to remain at the forefront.

R. Britton asked S. McCrea how he envisions the FDC and Explore Fairbanks working together. S. McCrea indicated that the best way is through conversations – sitting down, talking, and asking questions about what we want our community to look like and how we want to be perceived.

Chair Webb stated that, in regard to accessibility, one thing Explore Fairbanks asks to its partners is whether their location is accessible and whether they have accessible restrooms. She stated that perhaps they could also ask their partners how they attract diverse customers.

J. Rogers spoke to her own experiences as a business owner in the downtown area. She stated that, in Fairbanks, people should come as they feel comfortable. She indicated that it is time to move forward in the effort to truly be the *Golden Heart City*.

Chair Webb stated that J. Rogers made a comment once about acknowledging that people are human, and she stated that she thinks about that often. **J. Rogers** stated that her grandmother taught her to acknowledge everyone as a person.

T. Ledna stated that he would have to leave the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER (Reading of Mission Statement and Land Acknowledgement)

Chair Webb officially called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m. and asked Clerk Snider to call the roll. **J. Rogers** read the land acknowledgement, and **Chair Webb** read the mission statement.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

T. Ledna, seconded by **R. Basarab**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda.

Chair Webb called for objection to the APPROVAL of the agenda and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of August 8, 2023

T. Ledna, seconded by **J. Bagwill**, moved to APPROVE the meeting minutes.

Chair Webb called for objection to the APPROVAL of the meeting minutes and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

J. Bagwill pointed out that the Pledge of Allegiance was skipped.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Webb led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Chair Webb stated that the FDC has become its own worst enemy in regard to addressing issues and making recommendations to the City Council. She stated she is ready to start knocking down some barriers.

R. Basarab stated there is no reason the Chair cannot designate an FDC member to make comments before other groups, such as the school board. **R. Britton** stated he is interested in talking to media about what the FDC is all about. **Chair Webb** stated that she does not see anything wrong with becoming more visible in the public. She asked members whether they agree that individual members should be able to speak with the media in regard to the history of the FDC. **T. Ledna** stated that comments about things like the FDC's history and mission would be okay, but he cautioned having one member speak on behalf of the FDC at other public meetings. As an example, he stated that J. Rogers cannot speak on behalf of the City Council unless it is regarding an issue the Council has taken a position on. **Chair Webb** stated that she believes the discussion was aimed at making the community more aware of the FDC. She added that it is sad to see no one in the audience. **R. Basarab** suggested creating a press release that could be reviewed by members before going out.

J. Rogers stated that a former FDC member wrote a letter to the school board without formal approval of the FDC. She stated that such things first need the approval of the FDC.

R. Britton stated that he is seeking clarification on the procedure for how such things should be done.

Chair Webb asked for members' thoughts on drafting a general diversity statement for the group to review and suggested that perhaps R. Basarab could take on the task, given his background and experience. **J. Rogers** stated that she would like such a statement to include history of the FDC so that people can be educated on how the group came about. **R. Basarab** asked how that would differ from the mission statement. **Chair Webb** stated that it would include history and serve as a reintroduction of the FDC into the community. **R. Basarab** stated that he would soon be leaving town and he may not have access to technology. He stated that he could try to put something together before the next meeting. **Chair Webb** asked Clerk Snider to assist R. Basarab by providing him with some background information about the FDC.

Chair Webb suggested holding an open house in November and asked whether that would be appropriate. Clerk Snider listed the many different types of meetings and gatherings that the FDC has hosted over the years and stated that it would be possible. **Chair Webb** asked members if they would like to hold an open house in November. The consensus of members was in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) International Friendship Day Event and Update on FDC Event Materials

Clerk Snider shared that T. Ledna ordered FDC hats to be worn at events, and she showed the group some other FDC event materials, including rack cards, name tags, a tablecloth, and a banner. She shared details about the International Friendship Day event, including the date, time, and location.

A quorum was lost at 6:30 p.m. as T. Ledna left the meeting; R. Britton left at 6:32 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Calendar for FDC Speakers and Events

Chair Webb stated that the calendar can be provided to members at regular meetings. She indicated she would like to have more presentations at FDC meetings and invited members to reach out to her with suggestions.

FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS

J. Rogers asked HR Generalist Jessica Krier if she would be able to attend FDC meetings regularly. J. Krier stated that she would like to.

Chair Webb asked the new members what they would like to see from the diversity council. **J. Bagwill** responded that he would like to see communication, which will lead to more understanding. He stated that when he ran for City Council, he learned so much about so many

people just by taking a new path; he added that it was an eye-opening experience. He stated that it all starts with communication, and no matter how old a person gets, they should never stop wanting to learn. He stated that when he served on the City Council, he did not know much about the FDC – just that it could stir up trouble. He stated that came from a lack of understanding of what the FDC was all about. He spoke to the importance of communication and respect.

R. Basarab stated it is important for members to have a common mindset about what diversity means, and he spoke about the need for the City to have diverse hiring practices.

Chair Webb suggested that each member bring their own definition of diversity to the next meeting. She stated that everyone’s experiences affect how they perceive diversity. She stated that the exercise could be eye-opening and may help the group become more cohesive.

J. Krier referenced the earlier comments about acknowledging people as people. She stated that the City has been offering training to staff from the Arbinger Institute, and recently she and Brynn Butler, the Housing Coordinator, became Arbinger facilitators. She indicated that the City would be open to allowing FDC members to participate in the training, and she explained that the premise is just about acknowledging people as people and understanding the biases each of us carry into situations. She stated that it is a two-day training, and the next one will be in the October timeframe.

J. Rogers attested to the training being a wonderful experience, and she encouraged attendance by FDC members. J. Krier stated that there is also some literature, and she explained to members how to find the books online. She stated she would pass on details about the training when the dates were solidified.

Chair Webb thanked everyone for attending and welcomed the new members. She stated she is open for input and feedback from members, and she expressed her hope and excitement for the FDC. She stated that it is all about communicating.

MEETING DATES

- a) Next Regular Meeting Date, October 10, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Webb adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Juanita Webb, Chair

D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS