



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



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

Chair Juanita Webb called the regular meeting of the **Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC)** to order at 5:32 p.m. on the above date. Attendance was as follows:

Members Present (in person):

Juanita Webb, Chair, Seat D
Marsha Oss, Seat E
Dorothy Shockley, Seat F
Jonathan Bagwill, Seat G
June Rogers, City Council Member

Members Present (Zoom):

Timothy Ledna, Seat A
Richard Basarab, Seat B
Karen Blackburn, Seat I
Roscoe Britton, Seat J (unable to be heard on Zoom)
Rachael Kvapil, Seat K

Members Absent:

Jazzanne Gordon Fretwell, Seat C
Vacant, Seat H

Also Present:

D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk
Jessica Krier, HR Generalist

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

Chair Webb asked J. Rogers to read the FDC Mission Statement, and she asked J. Bagwill to read the Land Acknowledgement.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Webb led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

J. Bagwill, seconded by **D. Shockley**, moved to APPROVE the agenda.

Chair Webb called for a voice vote on the motion to APPROVE the agenda, and all members voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2023

J. Bagwill, seconded by **M. Oss**, moved to APPROVE the minutes.

Chair Webb called for a voice vote on the motion to APPROVE the minutes, and all members voted in favor.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

a) Members' Definitions of Diversity

Chair Webb briefly spoke to the recent quorum challenges of the FDC. She asked each member to introduce themselves and share with the group what diversity means to them.

R. Kvapil introduced herself and provided information about her professional background. She stated that whenever someone asks her about diversity, the first thing that comes to mind is frogs. She explained that is because she was fascinated by frogs in biology class and how the frogs, while being the same species, were all so different. She stated she relates that to the diversity in people.

R. Basarab stated the document he drafted for the FDC contained seven principles, and it was an effort to start a discussion about diversity. He suggested that the FDC have a common understanding of what diversity means prior to publishing materials. He then introduced himself and gave some information about his background.

T. Ledna introduced himself and provided information about his professional background. He stated that, to him, diversity is about having differences. He commented that he is more interested in inclusion and creating an environment that recognizes diversity and is inclusive of all people.

J. Bagwill gave an introduction of himself and spoke about his personal and professional background. He stated that diversity is about differences, but the FDC has an opportunity for diverse people to work together. He indicated that J. Rogers has changed his mindset on ideas like inclusion. He added that he would love to live in a place that does not need a diversity council, and the best thing the FDC can do is work itself out of a job.

K. Blackburn introduced herself and provided information about her professional background. She stated she feels that Fairbanks is her home and that diversity, to her, is a little of what everyone else has said. She stated that having been raised in the South, she has seen racism and prejudice and has had some bad experiences. She stated she loves what the FDC is trying to accomplish.

M. Oss gave an introduction of herself and spoke about her professional background. She stated that there is a new concept called *intersectionality*, which is about how one's life experiences come together and creates barriers to go through. She stated that to her, Fairbanks is diversity, and she wants to serve on the FDC to represent those who are not represented. She shared about her various life experiences and stated that she can relate to many situations. She stated she believes in looking for similarities – not differences – in others.

D. Shockley spoke about the reasons why she joined the FDC and stated that, to her, diversity is about inclusivity and equity. She provided information about her background and experiences in being an Alaska Native. She stated that people are sometimes put into categories, but she believes it is important to view others in more of a spiritual realm versus a physical realm. She expressed hope that as a community, people could be seen for who they are – not for what they are or how they may act.

J. Rogers stated that the idea of being inclusive has always been a definite and substantial label rather than “diverse.” She spoke to the talking circles that the FDC once hosted and stated that those were times where people felt welcomed and were able to openly share. She stated that Fairbanks’ “golden heart” is often used as a declaration in speeches but emphasized that the community needs to live up to that – not just declare it. She stated that many things are possible if everyone would strive to care for each other and lift each other up.

Chair Webb emphasized that acceptance is an important part of diversity. She commented that she is continually baffled by the level of anger she sometimes sees over just a difference in opinion. She stated that everyone is going to see life differently, but acceptance of others is important. She requested more information from M. Oss about the class she attended on intersectionality. She stated that it warms her heart to see so many FDC members attending the meeting and sharing.

J. Krier introduced herself and talked briefly about her family's history in Alaska. In viewing diversity, she stated that she thinks of people as a collection of varied realities and that each person's collection of experiences forms their perspective of reality.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) International Friendship Day (IFD) Follow-up

Chair Webb stated that R. Britton and J. Rogers attended the IFD event to represent the FDC. She asked J. Rogers to provide an update.

J. Rogers stated that Rosalind Kan, a former member of FDC, has organized the IFD event for many years. She stated that people from all walks of life, dancers, musicians, various groups, and all types of food are represented at IFD. She shared that the event takes place at the Pioneer Park Civic Center, and it is a great opportunity to talk with people. She commended R. Britton for helping with the event and for doing the heavy lifting.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Fairbanks Diversity Council "About Us" Statement

Chair Webb asked members how they would like to move forward with the FDC principles drafted by R. Basarab. She stated she would like to see the FDC move forward and accomplish tasks for the City.

The draft principles read as follows:

- 1. Our commitment to diversity is what holds our collective work together. We believe the City of Fairbanks must have an effective, broad-based movement focusing on diverse, prejudice-free, and race-free work environments that reflect our communities.*
- 2. We believe that key gatekeepers are essential to the goal of promoting diversity and eliminating prejudice in the City of Fairbanks.*
- 3. We believe that understanding the lessons of history allows us to create a more diverse future.*
- 4. We believe that we must be accountable to the community struggling with current and previous prejudice and racism.*
- 5. We believe that we must build principled relationships with other organizations and communities based on humane and diverse values.*
- 6. We believe that if a community's culture is respected and nurtured, the community's power will grow.*
- 7. We believe that racism and prejudice can only be undone if people understand what it is, where it comes from, how it functions, and why it is perpetrated.*

Members discussed the meaning of the word “gatekeeper” as it is used in the principles. Members talked about the purpose of the FDC and made reference to the goals cited in the Diversity Action Plan (DAP). Members discussed the challenge in getting the word out that the FDC exists and debated the various ways to engage the community. There was a fair amount of discussion about hosting a talking circle, but no dates were scheduled as some members felt that the FDC was not prepared to host such a gathering.

Chair Webb stated that her new position at Explore Fairbanks is Community Engagement Manager. She stated she would check to see if she can make the FDC a part of her duties. She shared that she may also be able to get some free advertising for the FDC.

Members spoke to the importance of having a quorum at meetings so that action could be taken.

J. Krier shared an idea for a Human Library, which she thought would be a good way to engage the community.

FDC MEMBERS’ COMMENTS

J. Rogers requested that the Mayor be asked to be more involved with the FDC, and she spoke about the level of involvement by past mayors.

J. Bagwill thanked everyone for attending the meeting.


Chair Webb requested that members reply to the City Clerk’s agenda emails each month to confirm whether or not they would be attending the meeting.

MEETING DATES

a) Next Regular Meeting Date, January 9, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Webb adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.



Juanita Webb, Chair



D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS