



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
APRIL 9, 2024, 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 December 12, 2023
6. CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)
7. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR
8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
9. NEW BUSINESS
 - a) Open Meetings Act Presentation by City Attorney and City Clerk
 - b) Human Library
10. FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS
11. MEETING DATES
 - a) Next Regular Meeting Date, May 14, 2024
12. ADJOURNMENT



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 Kyapil, 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

Open Meetings Act (OMA)

Fairbanks Diversity Council
April 9, 2024

OMA: AS 44.62.310 – .312

The purpose of the OMA is to ensure transparency in government.

Deliberations and actions of local governmental units must be conducted in meetings open to the public.

Who is covered by the OMA?

A governmental body of a public entity

- A “public entity” includes an entity of the state or of a **political subdivision** of the state, a school district, and other governmental units of the state or a political subdivision of the state
 - It excludes the court system or the legislative branch of State government
- A “governmental body” is defined as an assembly, council, board, commission, committee, or other similar body of a public entity with the authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity or with the authority to advise or make recommendations to the public entity

Who is covered by the OMA?

There are two types of governmental bodies, and slightly different rules apply to each:

1. Bodies that have authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity (e.g., City Council, Borough Assembly); and
2. Bodies that have only the authority to advise or make recommendations (e.g., Diversity Council, Clay Street Cemetery Commission).

Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC)

The FDC is covered under the definition of a governmental body because it is a council of a public entity (the City of Fairbanks), and it has authority to advise and make recommendations to the City.

What does the OMA require?

- All meetings of a governmental body of a public entity must be open to the public
 - Except as provided by this section or another provision of law [AS 44.62.310(a)]
- Reasonable public notice must be given for all meetings required to be open

What is a meeting?

A meeting of a body that has authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity occurs when:

- Four or more members or a majority are present;
- A matter is considered by the members collectively; and
- The body has authority to decide the matter.

What is a meeting?

A meeting of a body that only has authority to advise or make recommendations (such as the FDC) occurs when:

- Four or more members or a majority are present;
- The meeting is prearranged for the purpose of considering a matter; and
- The matter is something the body is empowered to act upon.

What is reasonable notice?

Timing of notice:

- Notice must be reasonable based on circumstances
 - Matters of greater importance may require more notice
 - Matters that require immediate action may get by with less notice
- Internal process should be followed
- Notice must be consistent

Contents of notice:

- Meeting date and time
- Meeting location, to include remote attendance options

Posting/publication of notice:

- Print or broadcast media
- Principal office of the public entity

Serial Meetings

- A polling of members is referred to as a “serial meeting”
 - Example: Polling occurs when a member of the governmental body contacts other members of the body, one or two at a time, to discuss business of the body.
- Any time public business is conducted outside of the public eye a court may conclude that an OMA violation occurred.
- This can happen easily or unintentionally by phone, text message, social media, or even casual conversation during a meeting recess.

Social Gatherings

- The OMA does not apply to purely social gatherings; however, caution should still be used when enough members are present to constitute a meeting
- Chance encounters by members of an advisory body do not constitute a meeting; however, a prearranged gathering for the purpose of any step of the deliberative process is considered a meeting

Social Media

- Social media has transformed the ability of citizens and their governments to communicate and interact. It has also created new challenges for governments.
- Additional guidance in State law is needed so members of governmental bodies do not inadvertently violate the OMA.

Suggestions

- Avoid adding or following other FDC members on social media. If you do add others, refrain from commenting on posts or threads with other FDC members regarding any matters within the FDC's jurisdiction
- You do not lose your right to free speech just because you serve on the FDC. But courts have held that the restrictions imposed by open meetings laws do not violate the First Amendment rights of elected officials

Resources

- The OMA (A.S. 44.62.310) is online at:
<https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#44.62.310>
- Other OMA resources are available at the State's Community and Regional Affairs website:
<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/LocalGovernmentResourceDesk/LocalGovernmentElectedOfficials/OpenMeetingsAct.aspx>
- Contact the City Clerk at 907-459-6774 or dsnider@fairbanks.us
- Contact the City Attorney at 907-459-6754 or tchard@fairbanks.us