



Legislation Text

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TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

THRU: Mayor Mitch Colvin, DEI Internal Committee Co-Chair
Mayor Pro Tem Kathy Jensen, DEI Internal Committee Co-Chair
Council Member Christopher Davis, DEI Internal Committee Co-Chair
Council Member Larry Wright, DEI External Committee Co-Chair

FROM: Telly C. Whitfield, Ph.D., Assistant City Manager
Anthony W. Wade, Ph.D., Human Relations Director

DATE: January 4, 2021

RE: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Internal and External Committees Update

COUNCIL DISTRICT(S):
All

Relationship To Strategic Plan:

Goal II: A Responsive City Government Supporting a Diverse and Viable Economy
Goal V: Financially Sound City Providing Exemplary City Services
Goal VI: Collaborative Citizen and Business Engagement

Executive Summary:

The City of Fayetteville, NC strives to be an attractive culturally diverse and inclusive city that is safe, prosperous, innovative and unified. While the city still is a great place to live, work and play, persistent disparities predictable by race, residential neighborhood, and other social characteristics exist in life outcomes such as income, education, employment, health, etc. There are no quick fixes to systems and structures that impact these outcomes, but we can identify where change needs to happen and take incremental steps to show progress.

Mayor Colvin established two separate City Council committees this summer to:

- Internally examine our City organization as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion principles and efforts to determine if obstacles to opportunities exist; AND,
- Externally to identify areas that will improve the equitable opportunity for all residents to succeed - regardless of their race, color, sex, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, income or zip code as well as engage the residents in dialogue about local issues.

Each committee's recommendations and next steps will be discussed.

Background:

The City's effort to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) began in August 2020 when both committees started their tasks. Mayor Colvin and Mayor Pro Tem Jensen served as co-chairs on both committees.

The Internal Committee focused on organizational capacity issues within City government based on an understanding that institutional and structural barriers to opportunity may exist. This committee examine the City's organizational policies and practices to determine whether structural inequities have been created and/or sustained within the workforce or impacted interactions with the community.

Their given scope of work focused on a better understanding of three areas:

1. Current workforce demographics (including trends) and Human Resource policies in place to mitigate unfair treatment;
2. Government procurement efforts to provide small, local businesses an equal opportunity to grow and be successful by participating in all aspects of City contracting of construction projects, professional services and the purchase of goods; and,
3. Police Department policies related to recruitment, citizen interaction, and department standards.

Council Member Davis serves as chair and Council Members Haire, Kinston, and Waddell were assigned to the internal committee.

The External Committee was established to help create safe spaces to foster dialogue that expands our community's understanding of the importance of DEI issues. The given scope of work focused on a better understanding of three areas:

1. Police and community relations such as traffic stop data and community policing efforts;
2. The future of the historic Market House in Downtown Fayetteville; and,
3. The impact of national attitudes on race relations and growing social unrest here locally.

Council Member Wright serves as chair and Council Members Dawkins, Ingram, and Banks-McLaughlin were assigned to that committee.

The committees each met nine times between August and December 2020. An update of the work to date was provide at City Council's November 9, 2020 Regular Meeting and the interim recommendations from each committee were accepted.

Since then, the two committees followed up on five items to prepare for further discuss with the entire Council.

1. The Internal Committee initiated a mandatory inherent or unconscious bias training for City County and all, or a portion of, the workforce. The first of two bias training sessions for City Council was held in December with the second scheduled for January. Incorporating a mandatory inherent training for a portion of the workforce is expected to be delivered in the future. This project is funded through the General Fund and will be initiated over the next calendar year by HRD.

2. The Internal Committee requested information on our peer jurisdictions' efforts to increase local and minority business participation in the public procurement process given our early success in reaching Council's aspirational goal of 40% of total spend. This information will be presented as part of the FY21 2nd Quarter LSBE report in January. At the same time, the committee emphasized the need to be patient regarding the Disparity Study (FY21 TFA) results which will take roughly two years for a complete outline of the consultant's recommendations.

3. The Internal Committee discussed the City Council's interest in establishing a citizen police board. Council asked staff to provide research on peer municipalities and their adoptions of citizen police boards. In December, the City Attorney's Office staff informed the Committee about the current legal standing for a Citizen Advisory and/or Citizen Review Board across the state. Staff was also asked to craft a framework for a taskforce to help identify a process for addressing the calls for some form of a citizen police board.

4. The External Committee requested staff pursue a contract with national social research firm ETC Institute of Olathe, Kansas to conduct a survey to serve as a baseline for community discussions related to race relations and the Market House. In late December, ETC notified the City that they are no longer interested in the work.

5. The External Committee tasked the Human Relations Commission with facilitating a series of town halls to discuss the survey results or other opportunities to engage with residents on DEI issues.

Issues/Analysis:

There are two outstanding items for discussion. First, Council will need to approve the framework provided for a taskforce to help identify a process for addressing the calls for some form of a citizen police board.

Secondly, Council will need to discuss how they would like to move forward in facilitating a community discussion over the next 60 days via phone calls, online survey instruments, mailings or public hearings.

Budget Impact:

N/A

Options:

Council provides consensus to staff on the proposed taskforce framework used for a process to address the calls for some form of a citizen police board and a methodology for facilitating community discussion on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Council does not provide consensus on the outstanding issues and instead provides further guidance on next steps.

Recommended Action:

Council provides consensus to staff on the proposed taskforce framework used for a process to address the calls for some form of a citizen police board and a methodology for facilitating community discussion on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Attachments:

Proposed Taskforce Framework