

MINUTES

Constituency and Community Outreach

Mayor-Elect Donna Deegan Transition

Date: Thursday, June 29, 2023

Location: Jewish Family & Community Services, 8540 Baycenter Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32256

Chair: Ahmed, Parvez

In Person: Allen, Omega; Meyer, Whitney; Decunto, Mario; Zhou, Wei; Watson, Cindy; Reyes, Andrea; Harris, Lee; Hicks, Joshua; McKinnon, Joey; Gundy, Reginald; Dumont, Georgette; Newman, John; Patz, Melanie; Harden, Christian; D'Amore, Erica; Jackson, Regina

Zoom: Nixon, Kiara; Mann, Angela; Alawee, Basma; Hutto, Rebekah

Absent: Dawkins, Janyce; Ticker, Susan; Leon, Anny

In-attendance as Subject Area Experts: Inam Sakinah and Matt Hartley

Legal Counsel: Lawiska Hodges

1. Meeting called to order at 6:05 by Parvez Ahmed
2. Minutes for prior meeting unanimously approved
3. Agenda for today unanimously approved
4. General Updates
 - a. Parvez Ahmed updated committee on challenges with scheduling subcommittee meetings due to space restrictions and delays with providing public notice
 - b. Parvez Ahmed reviewed timeline for committee activities
 - i. 6/26 - Parvez Ahmed provided preliminary progress update to Mayor-Elect Donna Deegan, Transition Committee Chairs, and Honorary Transition Chairs
 - ii. 8/20 - subcommittee reports will be due to Parvez Ahmed
 - c. Parvez Ahmed reminded subcommittees to make recommendations in their final reports that can be integrated into future City of Jacksonville budget proposals
 - d. Parvez Ahmed noted he would like to keep committee active to periodically evaluate progress on proposals and identify next steps

5. Subject Matter Expert on Youth and Interfaith Engagement

- a. Matt Hartley, Interfaith Center at UNF, shared the following insights
 - i. Interfaith Center and other student-facing institutions at UNF may be facing resources being taken away from them.
 - ii. Finding a community of belonging, cultivating meaning-making, nurturing mutual curiosity is important to students. When partnering with students, it is important to create a cohort that engenders a sense of community and a sense of being a part of something bigger. Students have a capacity to respect differences.
 - iii. Students wonder if people and leaders outside the university care about them.
 - iv. Students need to see themselves represented in city government in order to become more engaged and aspire to public service. We need to create levels of engagement that allow students to see a path for their advancement in public service.
 - v. Tapping into teachers can be a valuable resource for understanding concerns related to young people given their closeness to issues that impact students.

6. Subject Matter Expert on Building Cultures of Collaboration Across Differences

- a. Inam Sakinah, Founder of Power of WE and member of Harvard Medical School's Anti-Racism Task Force shared the following insights
 - i. Diversity in the community is a given. Inclusion is a decision.
 - 1. We have an opportunity to lay the ground for creating a culture of collaboration across differences in the city.
 - 2. We have demographic diversity in our constituency and diversity that is growing, but there are often siloes between groups of different races, religious backgrounds, sexual orientation, etc.
 - 3. There is silo between ordinary citizens and city government - people in positions of power and people they are elected to serve
 - 4. The work of community-building means breaking down these silos and developing our capacity to actually leverage our different ideas and identities to drive innovation power individual and collective success.
 - 5. Diversity must be treated as a tool, not a token; a skillset, not just a statistic. that can make every group
 - ii. Why before the what

1. Cannot assume that everyone understands why building community across our differences is important and why this should be a priority
2. It is our job to explain why this work matters and make the case
- iii. Make the case in language that your audience understand, in the context of things they already prioritize
- iv. How you say something matters just as much as what you are saying
 1. Given limited attention span and resources, strategic messaging and deploying modes of communications matters
- v. If this work is about breaking down silos (getting people of different backgrounds, worldviews, skill sets, and experiences), the work cannot happen from a silo
 1. Community-building efforts often fail because they are often told to stay in a single lane
 2. As you brainstorm ideas in your committee, consider how it might connect to the work of other committees
- vi. Start with questions, not answers
 1. Sometimes we think we need to have all the answers so we make assumptions that can hinder our progress
 2. This work is new so let us not be afraid to ask the hard questions at the outset

7. Nonprofit and Higher Education Subcommittee Updates

- a. Christian Harden, Co-Chair of the Nonprofit and Higher Education Subcommittee shared the following updates.
 - i. Subcommittee will aim to speak with as many nonprofit and higher education stakeholders as possible.
 - ii. Subcommittee will map relationships of subcommittee members to identify which individuals to contact and what data would be feasible to collect.
 - iii. Subcommittee will also discuss what method would be most useful to compile and present data.
- b. Discussion about how the Public Service Council (Grants) budget was significantly diminished over the past. The Public Service Council (Grants) serves nonprofits that provide human services to the community. Subcommittee should explore the history of funding changes and compare current funding to current needs.

- c. Question about if support staff can provide a summary of funds provided to nonprofits in the city? The Director of Strategic Initiatives website may have some detail.
- d. Comment about the need to examine how the Cultural Council can better support smaller nonprofits that find it difficult to compete with larger nonprofits for grants.

8. Interfaith Relations Subcommittee

- a. John Newman, Co-Chair of Interfaith Subcommittee shared the following updates
 - i. Subcommittee understands the need to work to recognize faiths that are not historically recognized and change the narrative of historical exclusion of certain faith groups.
 - ii. Subcommittee will prioritize ensuring there is a safe space to discuss important issues
 - iii. Subcommittee notes that hate-based incidents are at an all-time high, with Jewish and Muslim communities being especially targeted.
 - iv. Subcommittee recognizes that longevity is important because otherwise, the efforts could dissipate.
- b. Question about how do we inoculate ourselves against the toxicity that permeates in the community?
 - i. Comment about the need to be proactive about messaging given lack of awareness in the community
 - ii. Comment about the need to unify constituencies of different backgrounds around a collective goal of building a city that works for all of us and values all of us.

9. Empowerment of Marginalized Communities Subcommittee

- a. Whitney Meyers and Melanie Patz, Co-Chairs of the Empowerment of Marginalized Communities Subcommittee shared the following updates
 - i. First meeting will take place on 7/11 at 5 pm in the Jewish
 - ii. Meeting invites will be sent out for future meetings shortly
 - iii. Subcommittee is working on Identifying people to meet collectively vs. individual or smaller groups
 - iv. Subcommittees plan to use meetings to help generate recommendations or action items and plans to group the recommendations according to following lenses: budget, policy, engagement, and education

10. Committee Comments

- a. Comment about the need to prioritize informing and educating citizens on how they can participate in their government.
- b. Comment about how insights shared by subject matter experts has been useful and has already sparked new ideas.
- c. Comment about the need to identify unifying themes to collaborate on so people can put aside us vs. them and create a we.

11. Public Comment

- a. Did your recommendations get input from the person it is designed to impact?
- b. City of Jacksonville Website is not visually impaired friendly and generally not user-friendly which is a barrier to participation
- c. It is vital that we educate young people on how government works
- d. Boards and commission meetings should be livestreamed to provide greater access and transparency. There appears to be no dedicated office to ensuring all information about board and commission activity is publicly available

12. Next Full Committee meeting July 11, 6 pm at Jewish Family Services.

13. Meeting Adjourned 7:29

NOTEABLE RESOURCES:

- The Nonprofit Gateway - <https://nonprofits.coj.net/>
- My Jax Community Connect - <https://myjaxcommunityconnect.coj.net/#/dashboard>
- MyJax - <https://myjax.custhelp.com/app/home>