

MINUTES
Constituency and Community Outreach
Subcommittee – Empowerment of Marginalized Communities
Mayor Donna Deegan Transition

Meeting 2
July 18, 2023

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

NOTE: Due to technical difficulties, the Subcommittee Meeting switched from ZOOM to Microsoft Teams. Committee members were emailed informing them of the change and were provided new **login instructions**: **Microsoft Teams, Meeting ID: 260 107 440 794 Passcode: 9nwoBj**

Welcome:

Co-Chairs: Whitney Meyer and Melanie called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

Introductions:

Rev. Reginald Gundy; Madison Hilt; Kiara Nixon; Rosemary McCoy; and Wendy Ahmed

Marginalized Communities Definition:

One definition – communities that are excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural outcomes. There are multiple definitions.

The definitions are somewhat fluid, but there seems to be an instinctive, common understanding of what is meant by “marginalized communities.”

Marginalized communities were once understood to be certain neighborhoods and African American populations; now certain populations are increasingly becoming “marginalized,” such as immigrant groups, certain religious groups, LGBTQ+, and others.

The question becomes – how to turn city resources into programs that could provide a mechanism to help these communities be heard and included?

A foundational barrier is trust. Marginalized communities ***don’t trust the “system.”*** There is frustration because people’s lives are not being changed – no matter who gets into office.

Any group of people who are discriminated against because of who they are: i.e., racial groups, LGBTQ+, etc.; people facing violence.

Discrimination faced by marginalized groups is ***systemic***. All neighborhoods should be clean. Other challenges include housing, education, criminal charges, etc.

From a theological perspective, any definition of marginalized communities must include those underserved groups relegated to the sidelines and kept there due to these inequities and injustice.

Another question is how to address these issues on the City Council Agenda: religion, homelessness, skill and education deficits, race and immigrant status, and LGBTQ+, etc. There are different needs for each group.

Further explore the possibility of making Jacksonville a “Welcoming City,” modeled after Dayton, OH. Would also like to see the program focus on refugees and immigrants, as that community continues to grow. The “Compassionate Charter” can be used as a framework.

No need to worry about “overlapping” with the work of the other subcommittees. All recommendations will be combined into one transition report, with a focus on specific recommendations.

When considering recommendations, keep “action priorities” in mind that the mayor can take. In the Mayor’s Budget Announcement, she indicated there is \$25 million designated to be distributed among the seven (7) Transition Committees.

Your recommendations should include projects that could be piloted this year with limited funding, to try new things. If they work, perhaps they can make it into next year’s budget allocation.

The MLK Week idea, is a good example. So is the “Longest Table” idea. Focus on programs that help us discuss out differences.

The Pastors agree on opening, repairing parks for youth activities. Getting the kids off the streets from 3 pm to 7 pm. With educational, unity and team building activities.

Section 3, contracts states that developers must hire marginalized community residents on projects. It is critical that the city has a mechanism to help monitor and address compliance.

Guest: Wendy Ahmed, Executive Director, Jacksonville Human Rights Commission:

- History of the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission (JHRC) – purpose, activities, and budget
 - JHRC was established in 1967 after consolidation.
 - Purpose was to eliminate discriminatory practices, promote mutual understanding and respect among members of all economic, social, racial, religious and ethnic groups, and works to eliminate discrimination against and antagonism between religious, racial and ethnic groups.
 - JHRC is only 1 out of 12 regulatory boards with the power to impose fines and penalties.
 - JHRC has an 11-member board and nine (9) full time staff.
 - JHRC has three (3) primary methods of engagement: Investigation and enforcement; Prevention through education, training and outreach; and Intervention through community relations.
 - JHRC is also responsible for Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI) and Equal Protection under Environmental Quality (DHA/EPA)
 - JHRC recently revived “Study/Listening Circles” to foster community dialog and research and report on issues of community concerns.
 - JHRC has suffered budget decreases over the years and basically has funding for salaries.
- Current budget and authority
 - \$1 million budget – primarily salaries and benefits
 - Seven (7) full time Investigators, 1 Administrative Assistant and the Executive Director

- Recommendations regarding future JHRC activities, authority, and budget
 - JHRC should continue to provide equal access and opportunity to file complaints of discrimination.
- Thoughts on which communities to include in recommendations as being marginalized
 - Impoverished and those with lack of job opportunities, LGBTQ+, immigrant populations and those suffering religious intolerance.
 - Poor infrastructure, affordable housing needs.
- Thoughts/recommendations for increasing engagement of marginalized communities
 - Difficult to make recommendations with limited funding.
 - JHRC should continue outreach training.
 - Create partnerships and increase paths for nontraditional careers.
 - Monitoring hiring of special groups, i.e., “returning citizens.”
 - Address homelessness – accessible, affordable housing.
 - City should maintain Housing Program equivalent to Federal Fair Housing Act.
 - Continue outreach – working with HUD and other housing partners.
 - Work with special needs population to obtain adequate housing.
 - RE: Infrastructure – continue efforts (Title VI & VII) not to lose federal funding
 - JHRC must be fully staffed to be effective.
 - Restore JHRC funding back to where it used to be seven or eight years ago.
 - Identify and remediate bias in screening for participation in apprenticeship programs.
 - To define “marginalized communities,” look to the “protected characteristics” of race, color, disability, age, familial status, religion, sexual orientation, social identity, returning citizens, etc.

Jacksonville Small and Emerging Businesses (JSEB) – designed to help small businesses within the city, but it is not helping those it intended to help. Small businesses tend to be disproportionately minority. Better funding is needed.

Guest: Garrett Dennis, Director, City of Jacksonville Boards and Commissions:

JSEB is currently undergoing a disparity study. Consultants are assessing how to increase effectiveness. Dinah Manson is the head of JSEB, perhaps she can attend and address program concerns. August 2023 is the due date for the Disparity Study Report.

It will be important to know who participated in the study.

- Boards and Commissions
 - There are more than 65 Boards and Commissions
 - Some of the authorizing legislation uses very antiquated language and will need updating to make missions more relevant to today’s needs
 - Looking for ways to best measure the overall impact the Boards and Commissions are having/making
 - Want to make sure that the make-up of the boards and Commission are reflective of Jacksonville in its diversity and inclusion
 - Board and Commission Members should be paid, to show appreciation for their work/efforts
 - Boards and Commissions should be engaged with the community

- Some Boards and Commissions do not have specific eligibility requirements, such as age or education, only that a person has some expertise in the area
- May wish to spend time reviewing the “vetting” process
- Need recommendations on how to get the word out to the larger community about the vacancies on the various Boards and Commissions – presently relying on “word of mouth”
- Consider instituting a new board for “Returning Citizens” to better understand needs and link resources
- Looking for ways to engage our youth: Internship Programs, Creating a High School and College Pipeline to City Service and Employment
- Revive the “Red Cap Program,” where High School kids could learn employment skills and earn a salary while working with the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department

Subcommittee Assignments:

- Identify members who want to focus on Boards and Commissions
- Identify members interested in meeting with community leaders
 - Create organizing structure
 - Identify existing relationships
 - Identify speakers for the subcommittee

Future Meetings:

Location: Jewish Family & community Services, Community Room

Time: 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Dates: July 25

August 1

August 8

August 15 (Finalize draft recommendations)

August 22

August 29