



Citizens' Unity Commission

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 12, 2022 6:00 pm-8:00pm
City Hall, CDD Conference Room, 5th floor

Attendance:, Alice Capehart (Late), Jennifer Evans, Chris Grady, Tamika Lett, Malik Perry, Luretta Ray, Erica Spencer (Late), Mei Stukes, Ellen Velissarios, Mary Wallace, Steven Wendell

Absent: Katrina Bailey (Absent Notified with request for Electronic Participation), Justin Carolina, (Absent Notified); Shuntay Tarver (Absent Notified with request for Electronic Participation);

Staff: Imara Gabe Diaz (Interim Director), Assistant City Manager Steve Bond (Absent Notified)

Call to Order – Jennifer Evans, Chairperson @ 6:01 pm

Roll Call – Imara Gabe Diaz, Interim Executive Director

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions – Roll Call

- Imara Gabe Diaz, CUC Interim Director greeted the Commissioners a Happy New Year and acknowledged that a few Commissioners have communicated their planned absence. Gabe Diaz invited the Commissioners to enjoy the refreshments provided and called roll.

Item 2: Motion to approve Electronic Participation

In the absence of a physical quorum, the Commission was not able to move on a vote to approve. Commissioner Shuntay Tarver was in the Zoom waiting room however not granted access to the meeting.

Item 3: Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 12/9/2021

In the absence of a physical quorum, the Commission was not able to move on a vote to approve. Deferred to next scheduled meeting.

Old Business

Bylaws Discussion – Deferred to next scheduled meeting.

New Business

Item 1: Membership - Imara Gabe Diaz, CUC Interim Director asked all commissioners to provide any applicable updates as it pertains to emails, physical address and phone number



- Current Vacancies – Gabe Diaz explained that current vacancies are a result of Commissioner resignations and/or expired terms. According to the bylaws, the following Commissioners were sent notice via email of excessive absenteeism with recommendation for removal from the commission on December 21, 2021:
 - Commissioner Trevor Hutson (no response)
 - Commissioner Joicel Riviera (responded back saying “Thank you for informing me”)

On January 5, 2022 Commissioner Whalan McDew emailed the office to communicate a conflict in scheduling with a prior commitment on the same nights as the CUC meetings. Due to the conflict, Mr. McDew submitted a notice of resignation to the office on January 6, 2022.

Gabe Diaz recommended that the 2 Commissioners receiving absenteeism notices be removed from the commission however a motion was not made due to a lack of a quorum.

- Member Expectations (Attendance and Participation) – Gabe Diaz reiterated the Councils decision to not convene the Commission due to the implications of the pandemic and to hold off on accepting recommendations for new appointments. Those commissioners with partial and full terms due to expire would be “frozen in place” until further notice. Since that time, Council has since then given permission for the CUC to meet and has requested an updated roster along with recommendations for appointees.
- Gabe Diaz made the recommendation that Commissioners Luretta Ray and Mary Wallace be invited to the regular meetings, solely as community members, as their 2nd terms have expired on June 30, 2021. As the bylaws state, a commissioner is eligible to serve two (2) consecutive terms in which they must step down for 1 calendar year before being eligible for reappointment. Mr. Diaz opened the floor for discussion and the commissioners agreed to invite them both to the meetings, with the understanding that they will not have the ability to vote on any official business of the commission. Mr. Diaz reminded the Commission that these meetings are posted on our Public Meeting Notice and are open to the general public. Luretta Ray and Mary Wallace addressed the commission and have agreed to attend the public meetings as community members.
- Commissioner Steven Wendell brought to the attention of the group that due to the updated roster and that the above mentioned Commissioners are now attending the meeting as community members, without voting privileges, we still do not have a quorum present. Therefore, we are not able to make a motion to allow electronic participation at this time.
 - Commissioner Malik Perry asked for clarification on the quorum and numbers of members present. Gabe Diaz reviewed the bylaws with the Commission and explained:

Section VI - Meetings and Quorum

- A. The Commission shall hold regular, monthly meetings.



- B. The Annual Retreat shall serve as the annual meeting for the purposes of electing officers, self-organizing, evaluating programs, proposing any procedural or structural changes, establishing annual goals, and orienting new commissioners.
- C. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the *actual membership*.
- D. No vote of the commission shall be valid unless authorized by a simple majority with a quorum present.
- E. The conduct of meetings shall follow a pre-published agenda and order of business as outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)*, which shall govern the meeting in all cases not specifically provided for in this document.

Gabe Diaz informed the Commission of the suggested amendments to the bylaws to include a recommendation to decrease the body by one, from 20 to 19 members in the event of ties votes on important issues. Due to a quorum not being met, no vote was made.

Mary Wallace asked posted the question for clarity “Am I still a commissioner until June 30, 2022 or am I just a citizen”. Gabe Diaz replied that her appointment was from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2021 and that the bylaws state that you must sit out one (1) calendar year. On July 1, 2022 you will be eligible for re-appointment.

Gabe Diaz communicated that he submitted nine (9) recommendations to Council on January 12th for consideration to the CUC in which all were appointed. Those individuals will be receiving notice from the Clerk of Council in the near future and they will be invited to the next scheduled meeting. The letters of recommendation were shared with the Commission for the following appointees:

Dawn James – Partial term
Jabari Colon – Partial term
Brad Young – Partial term
Rebecca Hart- 1st full term
Raquel McMillian – 1st full term
Samantha Snead – 1st full term
Steven Wendell – Re-appointment for 1st full term
Ellen Velissarios – Re-appointment for 1st full term
Erica Spencer – Re-appointment for 1st full term

Chair Jennifer Evans commented on the phenomenal job in writing the recommendations to present to council in which Gabe Diaz replied that he only wants the best for this group which will in turn offer the best for Hampton.

Team Building Exercise

Gabe Diaz led the commission in a facilitated demonstration of bias, unconscious bias and how they determine your individual “comfort zone”. A series of short scenarios describing diverse social interactions were explained to the group in which they had to physically move to a different part of the room. Each area



represented varying degrees of comfort; Comfort Zone, Learning Zone, Panic Zone. After all the scenarios were described, a facilitated discussion followed with commissioners sharing about their own conscious and unconscious bias.

Item 2: Committee Discussion

Gabe Diaz gave a recap of the previous sub-committees that the CUC managed and highlighted some of the notable achievements. In searching for more ways to interact with the citizens of Hampton during the pandemic, the following sub-committees were suggested for consideration and execution for 2022:

Movie Talks, Hampton Health Equity Initiative, Hot Button “Fishbowl” Conversations, Youth Advisory Group, Unity Through Arts, and the Unity Awards.

Commissioners were encouraged to sign up for no more than 2 sub-committees, and break out into groups to discuss potential programming and events. In respect of time, the sub-committee work session was deferred to the next scheduled meeting. This will also allow the newly appointed Commissioners to join in the planning process.

Go-Backs – Chris Grady was recommended to sit on the CPAG Commission as liaison from CUC.

CUC currently has 3 open liaison seats vacant on the Commission with previous representation from the TRADOC Diversity Office, Ft. Eustis, the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities and the Neighborhood Commission.

Mary Wallace reminded the commission of her involvement in the initial selection process to hire the Chief of Police for Hampton. The Commission would like to invite the Chief to an upcoming CUC meeting.

Announcements

Covid 19 vaccines and booster shots are available, no appointment needed at various locations in the city. Please contact the Office of DEI for more details.

If any organization, family or individuals are in need of PPE to include first aid kits, face masks, sanitizer, hand wipes or thermometer, please contact the Office of DEI to arrange a pickup or drop off.

Adjourned 8:02pm by Chairperson Jennifer Evans

Next Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, February 10, 2022 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm at Ruppert Sargent Building