



## RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 20, 2024 (6:30 P.M.)

### MEETING MINUTES

#### **ATTENDEES:**

Checked boxes indicate present. Unchecked boxes indicate absence.

#### *Community Members:*

Pat Grant (Chair),  Gustavo Torres,  Jared Hautamaki,  Shane Lloyd,  Isaac Cudjoe,  Sonia Canzater

#### *County Staff Members:*

County Staff Members:  Jim Stowe,  Selena Mendy Singleton,  Betty Lam,  Aisha Williams,  Lt. Oneil Ornsby

#### **Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice Staff:**

Sarah Alvarez

**Guest:** John Willis

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Pat Grant.

#### **Roll Call**

- The chair conducted a roll call to confirm the attendance of committee members.
- Agenda for March 20, 2024, was adopted.
- Minutes for Feb 21, 2024, were adopted.

#### **Unfinished Business**

##### **Status of RESJAC retreat**

- The latest poll on preferred dates for the RESJAC retreat resulted in two dates: March 23, 2024, or April 27, 2024. Discussions took place, and the majority preferred to have it on April 27, 2024. Chair Grant asked committee members to save the April date on the calendar, and she will share the decision with Tiffany Ward, director of ORESJ.

##### **Gender Inclusive Restrooms**

- Selena Mendy Singleton reported that the restrooms on the 1st and 7th floors of the County Office Building have been designated as Gender Inclusive. Proper signage has been ordered, and the restrooms have been equipped with locks from inside.

- Jim Stowe shared that a letter is being drafted to be sent to the directors of Department of General Services and Department of Health & Human Services to ask for an inventory of where these restroom accommodations exist in public places, and a media plan to communicate to the public. The draft letter will be sent to RESJAC for review and input before it is sent out.

### **Status of Nominating Committee**

- Pat Grant reported that a Nominating Committee has been established in February and interviews of candidates for the RESJAC will commence soon.

### **Presentation of Suggested Issue Statement**

- Issac Cudjoe presented on Issue 2: *Growing National Movements against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives*. Dr. Cudjoe shared that there is a growing attack on DEI efforts across the county and that national movements can undermine local efforts. He would like to see the County reaffirm commitment and reinforce the importance of DEI. He suggests that RESJAC should take the lead in engaging with local media and the community most susceptible to misinformation to share the truth about DEI.

Discussions followed.

- Pat Grant asked for a quick summary of the various proposed issues and then asked the committee to use an online link to vote on the top three issues. It was noted by Gustavo Torres that Issue #4, Health Care for All, has already received state legislative approval and is awaiting the Governor’s signature. Therefore, there is no longer a need to vote on Issue #4.
- The voting resulted in Issue #2, *Growing National Movement Against DEI initiatives*, receiving the most votes, followed by Issue #1, *Tighter Coordination with RESJ leads*, and Issue #3, *Finding alignment and Adding Voice of RESJAC WITH ANTI-Hate Task Force*.
- The committee then broke out into three separate virtual rooms to have further discussions on the three Issue areas. Members were brought back to the main session, and chair Pat Grant asked each committee to summarize the breakout group to write up the notes of the breakout discussions and submit them as part of the record.
- Three agenda items were tabled until the next meeting: the Palm Card, bills on “Human Rights and Civil Liberties—Fair Criminal History and Credit Screening”, and “Property Tax Credit—Disabled Veterans.”
- Committee member Jared Hautamaki briefly mentioned that he wants the committee to be aware of an issue with some MCPS Title I schools losing the designation and the impact on the students. He said he will share additional information via email communications amongst committee members.
- **ADJOURN**  
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.