



RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 18, 2024 (6:30 P.M.)

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Checked boxes indicate present. Unchecked boxes indicate absence.

Community Members:

Dr. Pat Grant (Chair) Sonia Canzater Dr. Isaac Cudjoe Jared Hautamaki Joseph Hurst Dr. Tasnuva Khan Shane Lloyd Akufuna Ngonda Judith Thomas Gustavo Torres

County Staff Members:

Dr. James Stowe (Vice Chair) Selena Mendy Singleton (Parliamentarian)
 Dr. Anthony R. Alston Aisha Williams Ilana Branda on behalf of Shawn Bartley
 Betty Lam Lieutenant Oneil Ormsby

Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice Staff:

Tiffany Ward (Chief Equity Officer)

Guest:

- Dr. Tricia Rose (Guest Speaker)
- Tiffany Kelly
- 21 Additional Attendees

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

AGENDA

- Motion made (Joe Hurst) to amend agenda to add discussion on the work Dr. Khan would like to propose to RESJAC related to refugee support. Gustavo Torres seconded the motion. The agenda was unanimously adopted.

MINUTES

- The July 17th minutes were approved.

AGENDA ITEM 1 (Revised agenda order)

Item: Status of Palm Card

- Sonia presented a socially inclusive prototype for the group's reflection.
- Adjustment requested to change the contact to the general RESJAC contact email.
- Adjustment requested to add the word "committee" in the description.
- Motion (Ilana Branda) made to approve the palm card as corrected (above-referenced corrections). Akufuna Ngonda seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 2

Item: Dr. Tricia Rose

- Shane Lloyd, a colleague at Brown University, introduced Dr. Rose to RESJAC.
- Dr. Tricia Rose was the guest speaker. She is an internationally respected speaker, award-winning writer, and scholar of African American culture, racial inequality, and gender. At Brown University, Dr. Rose serves as the Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, Chancellor's Professor of Africana Studies, and Associate Dean of the Faculty for Special Initiatives.
- Dr. Rose expressed interest in understanding the work of RESJAC as well as sharing her perspectives.
- Dr. Rose gave an overview of metaracism and how systemic racism works, which she stated is fueled by interconnected policies, practices, and beliefs.
- Dr. Rose's research led to a thorough policy examination and concluded that a systems approach and analysis were required (i.e. what are the outcomes of the whole system).
- She spoke about how no policy stood alone. Each had companion policies that compounded the risks of dangers or losses.
- Dr. Rose compared the impact of police violence on the Black community and the structured universe of systematic racism.
- She stressed the importance of "Talking about what happens all the time versus the specific examples".
- She shared the importance of not Individualizing racism (one cop is a bad apple) but looking at the system (why do we have a school-to-prison pipeline), which drives" a higher, more compounded risk of danger or loss".
- Dr. Rose recommended using a visual mapping process to discuss how the system and policies come together to result in systemic racism.
- <https://websites.umass.edu/comm397ss-jsaxe/class-map-youth-systemic-racism/>
- Dr. Rose stressed that it is incumbent on all to challenge systemic racism, speak up to ensure cross-cutting factors are considered, and bring attention to those historical barriers. Dr. Rose also stated that "the deep change required to achieve racial justice must be fueled by a systematic way of thinking."

AGENDA ITEM 3

Item: Department of Corrections Presentation (Aisha Williams) on the challenges that returning citizens face.

- Renters tend not to rent to individuals who have a felony.
- County/state safety net programs' eligibility is also a barrier.
- Montgomery County's market rent on average is 26% higher than neighboring MD counties (\$1,772 for a studio apartment)
 - Creates an additional barrier for returning citizens because of limited employment opportunities of this population.
- To secure public housing, individuals must go to the crisis center and potentially stay in a public homeless shelter.
- The county does not have expansive services to support individuals who are being released.
- Employment challenges in this population are significant, particularly because so many of the businesses have a relationship with the government (i.e. the need for a security clearance),
- RESJAC can help investigate ways to find affordable housing for returning citizens.
- Housing is really the most difficult barrier for returning citizens, particularly for sex and violent offenders.
 - "No one really wants to hire them, and no one really wants to rent to them".
- Guest Tiffany Kelly commented that a felony lifetime ban for a sex offender is among the only charges that make individuals ineligible for public housing.
 - Aisha Williams will follow up with Tiffany Kelly to understand the specific regulations and which charges are disqualifying.
- Aisha Williams will continue to research challenges and potential solutions.

AGENDA ITEM 4

Item: Dr. Khan proposed the rejuvenation of the Housing Committee for the RESJAC committee

- 81 individuals, including a population of recent refugees, are facing imminent eviction, predominantly in the Silver Spring area.
- Dr. Tasnuva Khan, through her network and non-profit, has engaged this community and is working to find solutions to address their immediate and long-term. needs.
- RESJAC's subcommittee may provide an opportunity for RESJAC to connect and help raise awareness for/find solutions to these challenges.
- A suggestion was made for the committee's initial charge to include addressing the challenges raised by fellow RESJAC member Aisha Smith about housing challenges for returning citizens.

- Akufuna Ngonda made a motion to restore the Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee with the first two items on the subcommittee's agenda including the housing plight of returning citizens and the acute housing crisis of a vulnerable population in Silver Spring (including Afghan refugees). Dr. Isaac Cudjoe seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.