



# CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - SPECIAL CALL MEETING

Operations Center - Assembly Room | 305 Williams St. | Hendersonville NC 28792  
Wednesday September 13, 2022 – 5:30 PM

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## MINUTES

Present: Jayne Jennings, Chair, Vice-Chair, Laura Bannister, Josh Williams, Nancy Diaz, Eric Gash, and Melinda Lowrance

Absent: Florence Allbaugh

Liaisons Present: Mayor Barbara G. Volk, and Mayor Pro Tem Lyndsey Simpson

Staff Present: City Manager John Connet, City Clerk Angela Reece, and Communications Manager Allison Justus

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jayne Jennings called the meeting to order with a quorum of members in attendance.

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Indián Jackson addressed the Committee asking for consideration of support to recommend City Council issue an apology for the City's involvement in urban renewal projects of the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Hendersonville.

Leslie Carrie addressed the Committee asking for consideration of support to recommend City Council issue an apology for the City's involvement in urban renewal projects. Ms. Carrie stated acknowledgement and apology are necessary in order to validate the pain that was caused and to assist in shifting the culture to show value to those who live in the area.

Tony Robles addressed the Committee regarding the long-term effects of urban renewal on People of color and expressed thanks and appreciation to the Committee and Council for their efforts in promoting diversity.

### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Committee Member Melinda Lowrance moved to approve the agenda as presented. Laura Banister seconded the motion. A unanimous vote of the Committee followed. Motion carried.*

#### 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of May 10, 2022 and August 10, 2022 Minutes- *Angela Reece, City Clerk*

*Committee Member Nancy Diaz moved to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2022 and August 10, 2022 meetings as presented. Melinda Lowrance seconded the motion. A unanimous vote of the Committee followed. Motion carried.*

#### 5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

#### 6. NEW BUSINESS

A. 7th Avenue Public Art Project - *Karen-Eve Bayne, STEAP*

Karen-Eve Bayne addressed the Committee regarding public art in the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor to promote a sense of value and respect for community and culture. She discussed planned projects, yarn bombing (art), murals, and other public art installations. Ms. Bayne also discussed various community meetings and events in which public input, feedback and support was gained. She asked for support of the Committee and consideration of making recommendation to City Council for support. Ms. Bayne additionally discussed solicitation of local artists for the project and the criteria for selection of murals and stated all the proposals involve people of color and represent Hendersonville.

Committee members posed questions of how long the art installations would stay on the trees and who would be responsible for cleaning up. Ms. Bayne stated with the approval of the Hendersonville Tree Board the crocheted sweater art will be on the trees from November to February and will be monitored and removed by her staff at the appropriate time.

After much discussion Committee Members expressed excitement and enthusiasm to endorse the project.

*Chair Jennings moved that the Committee recommend supporting the project to City Council. Melinda Lowrance seconded the motion. A unanimous vote of the Committee followed. Motion carried.*

Community members and interested persons may find more information on this project by visiting <https://www.steap.net/>.

#### 7. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Urban Renewal Presentation - *Crystal Cauley*

Crystal Cauley addressed the Committee regarding her experience with Urban Renewal in Hendersonville. Ms. Cauley discussed her thoughts on the relationship between the community and the city and stated she has reached out to elected officials in the City of Charlotte who have issued an apology for Urban Renewal and asked consideration of the City of Hendersonville to do the same. Ms. Cauley asked for an acknowledgement of what has taken place in the past. Laura Bannister clarified with Ms. Cauley that she was asking for an apology for acts that have taken place over many years.

Chairman Jennings and fellow Committee members expressed thanks to Ms. Cauley for her courage in coming forward to express her concerns and experiences. Chairman Jennings recalled previous discussions regarding reparations and the beginning meetings with the Diversity Firm Akirah.

Ms. Jennings stated she believes all of this feedback will be taken into account over the course of the next year and reminded everyone there are persons in the city still alive who were victims of Urban Renewal and said she believes this is part of the healing process. Ms. Jennings said the Akirah firm will practice due diligence and will present findings to the Council for their recommendations.

After much discussion the consensus of committee members was to form a committee consisting of city staff, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Members, City Council Members, and community members to draft an apology letter to send to City Council for consideration.

City Manager John Connet acknowledged the trauma that Persons of Color have experienced in Hendersonville due to Urban Renewal and said he feels it is very important to gather oral history of the persons who experienced this, so we do not forget what happened. Manager Connet proposed working with the People's Museum to capture this. Encouraged opportunities to do this.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Jayne Jennings adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

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Jayne Jennings, Chair

ATTEST:

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Jill Murray, City Clerk