



CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Operations Center - Assembly Room | 305 Williams St. | Hendersonville NC 28792
Tuesday, May 14, 2024 – 5:30 PM

MINUTES

Present: Vice-Chair Nancy Diaz, Laura Bannister, Melinda Lowrance, Florence Allbaugh and Richard Reagan

Absent: Chair Josh Williams, Eric Gash

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

Staff Present: City Manager John Connet, City Clerk Jill Murray, Communications Manager Allison Justus,

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair, Nancy Diaz called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Florence Allbaugh moved, seconded by Laura Bannister to approve the agenda as presented. A unanimous vote of the Committee followed. Motion carried.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cher Sylvius, 246 Mountain Sunset Trail, Hendersonville spoke about a mural that has different presentations of mountains, a bear, two hands shaking and then you have the LGBTQ flag and I don't feel it should be there. I don't feel like that's inclusive and its specific to a specific group of people and I don't see other groups on there. I don't think its proper that the city spread a particular ideology. She also spoke on the policy review and asked how do you get a diverse candidate for every job out there? We should not be meeting quotas and should be basing it on their qualifications. Instead you're looking at their race and sexual orientation.

Nancy Diaz said the mural is all inclusive and the hiring is not about quotas but about making sure our vacancies are reaching a diverse audience.

City Manager Connet added that the mural is being installed by a non-profit group who is raising the money and finding the location on their own. The city is not involved in it. It's a private matter and if we tried to stop it, frankly it would be unconstitutional. As for the jobs, this is not about quota, it's about putting the jobs in a variety of places across the state and not always advertising in the same locations and getting the same standards.

Karen Hensley, 417 Crystal Heights Drive, Hendersonville, spoke about the money being used for DEI and said we have bigger problems like homelessness. This is a non-issue and we should be using the money for mental health and homelessness.

Jane Volelo, 281 Vincent Place, Hendersonville spoke about jobs and that is should be about putting it in places everywhere and deciding who is the best for the job and should have nothing to do with skin color or background. Also, the mural is missing the flag. That is exclusionary. This flag includes all of us.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 12, 2024 – *Jill Murray, City Clerk*

Florence Allbaugh moved, seconded by Laura Bannister to approve the March 12, 2024 minutes as presented. A unanimous vote of the Committee followed. Motion carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Monthly Recognition Schedule – Allison Justus, Communications Director

Communications Manager Allison Justus presented a “Content Calendar” of what the city has recognized in the past even before this committee was created. The ones in bold are the months/dates that the committee said they would like to recognize online and the non-bold is a summary of what we have done online. She wanted to check in and see what, if anything, they would like to add to it.

Diversity Calendar

Martin Luther King Day – General commemorative post

February – Black History Month

2021 – Henderson County Leaders

2022 – Henderson County Leaders

2023 – Local Landmarks

2024 – Regional & NC Leaders

March – Women's History Month

2022 – Introduction/Volk as 1st Council Member; 1990s female Council Members; Hensley & Simpson; Roundtree

2023 – Women's Leadership Breakfast with COH staff; NC Women's Timeline from NC Museum of History; COH Leadership timeline

2024 – Highlighting City Staff with posts on police, admin, water/sewer, engineering, fire, finance, downtown, planning, public works, treatment plants

May - Jewish American Heritage Month

2022 – Agudas Israel 100th Celebration; Morris Kaplan memorial

2023 – History of Jewish Heritage Month; Jewish merchants of Hendersonville video

2024 – Series of posts compiled with Cantor Labow & Dr. Beckerman about the Holy Ark, 10 Commandments Plaque, prayer books, stained glass, shofars

May – Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

2022 – Tony Robles poet and author

2023 – Heang Uy Downtown Board Member and teacher

2024 – General post scheduled

June – Pride Month

2022 – Jerry & Bea Miller (Grandparents of Hendersonville PFLAG)

2023 – General post and Picnic for Pride

Juneteenth

2022 – Education & Proclamation

2023 – Post with local events – Juneteenth Freedom Fest, Juneteenth at Farmers Market, Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom

Hispanic Heritage Month

Earlier this month for Black History Month, Josh Williams sent an email suggesting that we focus on black leaders for Black History Month so I've listed a list of potential black nominees. They come from a variety of sources such as Facebook comment and Facebook messages. This is what we've put together so far.

2022 – Hispanic Heroes series – Adriana Chavela, Ismael Martinez, Lori Garcia-McCammon, Juana Diaz; Latinx Events; Migrant Worker post

2023 - Hispanic Heroes series – Gabby Mendez, Israel Olivares Mejia, Claudia Daniela Maldonado, Delia Jovel

November – Native American Heritage Month – General commemorative post

Potential Black History Month 2025 Honorees:

Yvonne Allen Turner
George "Tiger" Green
Quincy Foster
Jessie Ferguson
Robert "Coach Robbie" Lowrance
Ernest Lumpkin
John W Gary
Pete McDaniel
Marcus Vance
Joreeca Dinnall
Darnella Sharmayn
Kanika Sitton Fox
Thane Gash
Barbara Summey Marshall
Vanessa Miller (Charlotte based)

2021	2022	2023	2024
Blair Craven	Rena Clay	Ninth Avenue School	Nina Simone
Melinda Lowrance	Bessie Horne	Sixth Avenue School	Hiram Rhodes Revels
John Marable	Rev. George Weaver	The People's Museum & Walk of Fame	Thomas Sowell
Preston Blakely	Debbie O'Neal Roundtree	Shaw's Creek African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	Chris Paul
Dorothy Means	Fred Means	St. Paul Tabernacle AME Zion Church	John Coltrane
Ronnie Pepper	Barbara Johnson	Star of Bethel Baptist Church	P.B. Young
Donnie Parks	Madeline Cunningham Royes	Union Grove Baptist Church	Thelonious Monk
Betty, Eric, and Sam Gash	Rev. James Pea	Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church	Sugar Ray Leonard
Diane Caldwell ,	Kathleen Williams	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park	Anna Julia Cooper
Sam Mills	Rev. Naomi Omega Sitton Bynum	William H. King Memorial Park	Charlie Sifford
James Pilgrim Sr.	Rod Whiteside	J. H. Sullivan Park	Sarah Boone
Roxanna Pepper	Shirley Jackson Davidson	Oakdale Cemetery – Overview	Michael Jordan
Rev. C.E. Rowe ,	Frank & Harry Wilson Jr.	Gravesite of Sergeant Walter Bryson (Oakdale)	Dr. Darin Waters
Johnny Landrum	Cora Young	7th Avenue Community Garden	Romare Bearden
Odell Rouse	Rev. Henry Marsh	Patton Hospital	Golden Frinks
Hannah Edwards	Wanda Horne	Robert Quinn's office & shop	Betty Davis
William H. King	Luretta Cunningham Briggs	Black Bottom Community	Buck Leonard
Terry L. Martin	Miles Campbell	Peacock Town Community	Moms Mabley
Joseph Knight	Cora Robinson	West End Community	Dennis Robinson
Danaé Aicher	Jessie Jenkins Wilson	Brooklyn/Green Meadows	Crystal Fox
Rev. Dr. James McMin	Cary Booker	Brooklyn Businesses	Brad Daugherty
Rev. Anthony McMin	Henry Simmons	Hotels, Motels and Guest Houses	Pic & Bill
Yvonne Mims Evans	Eva Owens Austin	Beauty Shops & Barber Shops	Roberta Flack
Rev. Billy Waters	Johnny Young Jr.	Community/Civic Businesses & Organizations	Harthorne Wingo
Tippy Creswell	Lance Allen	More Black Owned Businesses	Shirley Hemphill
Rev. James H. Sullivan	Hortense Potts		William Barber
Gary Rivers	Callie Mae Green		Elizabeth Cotten
Pat Jones	Herbert Blake		Chuck Brown
			Greensboro Four

Potential Black History Month Honorees

Email from Josh Williams:

Hope everyone is having a great day thus far. I just wanted to make a suggestion if I may. I understand that the decision has already been made as far as who we're going to honor in the month of February for Black History Month. I thought about this earlier this morning and I think that we should keep the black history in Hendersonville and Henderson county going. We have a lot of current leaders within the community who deserve to be recognized as well. To name a few we have a black head coach at Hendersonville High School along with a black head basketball ball coach who have both done some good things. We have 2 local barbers who has served the community with their talents. An assistant black football coach at West Henderson who has helped the team tremendously. We have two black resource officers in two of the city school Hendersonville High, and Bruce Drysdale. We have a lot more other current leaders to choose from as well. Just wanted to make a suggestion for the next year.

Yvonne Turner – 1st Female African American Sworn in with HPD

Suggested by Yvonne Allen Turner

808-1016

yaturner@bellsouth.net

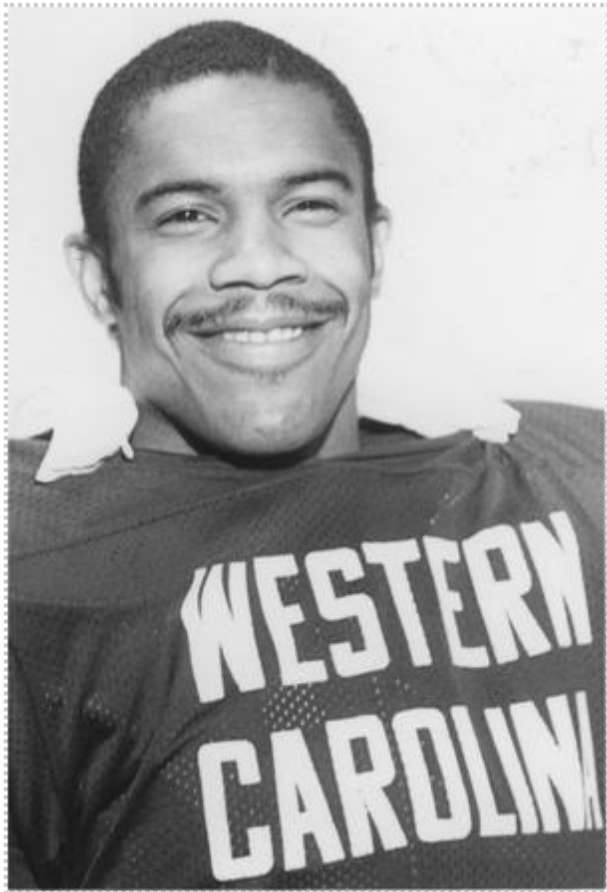
Yvonne Allen Turner born and raised in Henderson County to natives Elizabeth and Cress Allen. Yvonne is married for 45 years to George Turner with two beautiful daughters. Graduating from West Henderson High School, she worked with Duke Power Company nearly 20 years; while earning an Associate Degree in Computer Programming attending Blue Ridge Community College, AB Technical College and Greenville Technical College. In 1996 she briefly owned a fitness Center and went thru training for law enforcement. Yvonne was the first African American Female Police Officer to be sworn in with Hendersonville Police Department. One of Yvonne's fond memories in law enforcement was being granted Federal funding for training and given the opportunity to be a School Resource Office for Hendersonville Middle School and Bruce Drysdale Elementary. She worked part-time with HPD, while pursuing her career in customer service area she became Field Supervisor for Steelcase prior to the company closing in Fletcher. She volunteered with Henderson County Guardian Ad Litem program. She started work with North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles and License & Theft Bureau where she retired in 2019. She currently is a reserve deputy with Buncombe County Sheriff Department; also, being the first African American Female Deputy to be sworn in with Buncombe County. Yvonne was an Eastern Stars member as well as being in Hendersonville Women's Lion Club. Yvonne loves traveling, her grandchildren, fellowship and singing in her church at Stanford Chapel where her great grandfather founded in 1929.



George "Tiger" Green

George Everett Greene was born in Hendersonville in 1962. He attended East Henderson High School and was a two-time first-team All-Southern Conference player in 1984 and 1985 seasons with the Western Carolina Catamounts football team. Green played seven seasons in the NFL with the Atlanta Falcons (1985) and Green Bay Packers (1986-91). He was inducted into the Western North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame in March 2019. <https://catamountsports.com/honors/western-carolina-athletics-hall-of-fame/george-tiger-greene/37>

<https://www.statscrew.com/football/stats/p-greentig001>



Quincy Foster - Minor League Marlins baseball player from Hendersonville

<https://www.blueridgenow.com/story/news/2014/06/27/former-pro-player-foster-mentoring-little-leaguers/28318542007/>

Jessie Ferguson

Chris Ferguson wants to nominate his father Jessie Ferguson 252-717-1394

Robert Lowrance – Coach Robbie

West Coach and Assistant Football Coach – 1st black head coach at WHHS – worked there for 18 years

Ernest Lumpkin

Ernest Lumpkin lived from 1901 to 1976. He was employed as a chauffeur. Allison was not able to [located photo](#) - possibly one at the courthouse?

John W Gary - Pastor Elder of Agape Christian Fellowship Church of God in Christ

Facebook message from Gloria Jennings: Please Celebrate the Pastor Elder of Agape Christian Fellowship Church of God in Christ John W Gary

Pete McDaniel – Arden native - AVL/HVL writer who wrote 2 best-selling books on Tiger Woods. Suggested by Melinda Lowrance.

<https://www.blueridgenow.com/story/news/local/2024/02/05/tiger-woods-writer-pete-mcdaniel-headed-to-unca-athletics-hall-of-fame/72410862007/>

Marcus Vance & Joreeca Dinnall HPD SROs suggested by Josh Williams.

Other suggestions from Facebook:

- **Darnella Sharmayn**
- **Kanika Sitton Fox**
- **Thane Gash** is also an avid supporter of the Children and Family Resource Center and has been for 14 years. He also played in the NFL. I just wanted to share that in case you also wanted to highlight him. Thank you! It has also occurred to me that Thane might be more private than I realize so he might not want to be featured, I do not know. Thank you!
- **Barbara Summey Marshall** She is a Hendersonville native and is doing great things in NC for women veterans and many more services. Check her website out.

(NC) Celebrating Black History

Vanessa Miller – Author of The American Queen

Author from Dayton, OH who is Charlotte-based. Suggested by Crystal Cauley.

https://www.essence.com/culture/black-woman-queen-america-louella-montgomery/?fbclid=IwAR1wNuCfybU9k9oxsg__y4PCZI-HID2zvo_MBYoMMwgNbO-SkSXtpkR_0lw

<https://vanessamiller.com/about/>

Donald Byrd

Jazz trumpeter Donald Byrd pioneered jazz education programs at Historically Black Colleges including the North Carolina Central University's Music department. Donald Byrd was not a native North Carolinian, but due to his success as a jazz musician, NCCU reached out to Byrd where he and saxophonist Stanley Baird, helped launch the first bachelor degree program in Jazz Studies in the state of North Carolina in 1977. One of the first creations of Byrd's collaboration with NCCU was the album Super Trick from a group called New Central Connection Unlimited or N.C.C.U., which was made up of NCCU students.

<https://www.ncarts.org/blog/2019/04/12/when-byrd-flew-north-carolina-central-university>

Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou is a poet, memoirist and civil rights activist who lived in Winston-Salem, NC for more than 30 years. In 1973, a group of Wake Forest University students invited her to speak during Black Awareness Week. Angelou returned to Wake Forest several times in the years after, and in 1981, she accepted a lifetime professorship, teaching a

variety of subjects. She purchased a home in Winston-Salem where she lived and worked until her passing in 2014.

<https://mayaangelou.wfu.edu/story/>

www.visitwinstonsalem.com/blog/home

Some of the feedback I'd like to get from this committee are:

- Are these month and dates what we to continue focusing on?
- If you have any direction on where to go with some of these items, just let me know. You can send me an email or let me know at this meeting.
- Next year for Black History Month, do we want to go in more local direction? Any assistance helping me find more people to recognize, would be greatly appreciated.

Melinda Lowrance said there is a picture of Ernest Lumpkin in the 2nd floor of the courthouse.

Laura Bannister mentioned Pride Day on June 8th at Jackson Park and for 2025 they would like to solicit the city to have a festival on the end of Main Street. Plans are in the works to come to the City Council and ask for that next year.

Florence Allbaugh said that sometime in October, she would like to do an International Festival and she will need a committee for that from here and from the outside to help me finalize it. Hilton Head had a wonderful lantern festival and I would like to propose that the Mayor and John go look at it and see it except that is November and the international festival is in October.

B. Discussion regarding Diversity and Inclusion Committee 2024 Workplan – John Connet, City Manager

City Manager Connet said at the last meeting we presented the proposed work plan and I broke it down into four areas: Communication, Outreach, Accessibility, Training and Policy Review. I would like to go through each of these and possibly rank them and that will help us determine responsibility and scheduling etc. They were ranked as follows:

Communication:

- Ensure critical documents are printed in English and Spanish.
- Language or Hearing Interpretation for Public Meetings (Request Policy).
- Review website contact information and easy to find. Update Public Services Information.
- Review imagery to ensure website and social media represents the community.

Outreach:

- Setup meetings between operational departments and local advocacy groups. Give tours or create speakers bureau.
- Hold City Information Fair(s) at location(s) where underserved residents are likely to attend and Hold City Career Fair(s) at location(s) where underserved residents are likely to attend.
- Host a multi-cultural day or International Festival (Florence Allbaugh)

Accessibility:

- Conduct a city building ADA Accessibility Audit
- Develop a consistent citizen complaint process for use by all departments.
- Identify historic or culturally significant properties for consideration by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Evaluate Street Naming Policy

Training: (All go together)

- Staff training on how to communicate effectively with individuals who may not use English as dominant language.
- Staff training on how/when to assist individuals with disabilities.
- Leadership training focusing on Emotional Intelligence.
- Recruitment and interview skills training.

Policy Review:

Review hiring/recruitment procedures to ensure a diverse candidate pool is present for all jobs.

C. Staff Update – *John Connet, City Manager*

City Manager Connet gave an update on:

- Patricia King spoke at the last meeting regarding the incident with her son at the Orchards Café and Grill. We continue to try to help Ms. King and it is challenging to deal with the emotions of it and being able to provide the information that we can provide legally that is available to us by State Law. Based on the recommendation of Melinda and Eric, I reached out to Akhirah for some advice from them on how to approach it and resolve some of the concerns. I will admit Ms. King is not satisfied at this point.
- Josh has spoken to the folks at the Congregational Church and their racial justice team and I had a conversation with them about the work of the committee and what we are doing and they offered their assistance.
- I'm ecstatic to say that Melinda Lowrance has been appointed to City Council. She will have to resign from this board. I think she will be taking Mayor Pro Tem Simpson's spot with the Mayor, as your liaison. Mayor Pro Tem Simpson will be going to the Tree Board so we will need to seek appointment of a new member for this board so we'll advertise for that. Melinda we are sad to see you go as you were the lead in starting this.
- There is a new law called PROWAG, its Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines, so whenever we resurface a street or make street improvements, we have to evaluate sidewalks and the entire street, so we can't just resurface it, we have to look at all modes of transportation and pedestrian sidewalks and make sure that they all meet accessibility/ADA guidelines. That is a new standard and that will be an additional component from now on.

Melinda Lowrance added that she is so thankful that the City Manager and Mayor were open to listen and start this committee and I think we have done great so far and I think we can be a role model for other cities. This group is diverse and I think the citizens are well represented here.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Lyndsey Simpson suggested that we approve moving forward with the International Festival before adjourning and forming a subcommittee.

City Manager Connet said that we cannot commit staff time to it. It would have to be a subcommittee and if you do things off of Main Street, it will be less expensive and less of a hassle. Start small and then you can grow it.

Melinda Lowrance moved, amended by Nancy Diaz, seconded by Laura Bannister to move forward with forming a subcommittee regarding the International Festival Committee to explore and find out what the options are at the Whitmire Center, to find sponsors and to keep it small as there will be no city funding this year. A unanimous vote of the Committee followed. Motion carried.

Richard and Florence will explore forming a committee.

Nancy Diaz thanked Melinda and Lyndsey for their time on the board and would like to recognize our emotions, our lives, our importance as humans and our commitment to diversity and inclusion and just recognize all of the different things that happen to our bodies whenever we hear words and opinions that would not represent diversity and inclusion in our committee. I just want to recognize us all as people and thank you all.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Nancy Diaz adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Nancy Diaz, Vice Chair

ATTEST:

Jill Murray, City Clerk