

DRAFT MINUTES
TASK FORCE ON RACE AND CULTURE

Friday, August 4, 2017, 7:30 a.m.

Exhibit Hall, Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), 1700 University Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Call to Order

Rosa Navejar, Presiding Chair of the Race and Culture Task Force, called the meeting to order at 7:37 a.m.

In attendance:

Task Force Members
Biggins, Lillie – Co Chair
Bloom, Rabbi Andrew – Co Chair
Boswell, Charles
Dansby, Walter
Fernandez, Robert I.
Frias, Miriam
Goldberg, Bob
Harper, Yolanda
Malek, Nima
Mao, Ratana
Martinez, Arturo
Martinez, Roxanne
Mossige, Dr. Terri
Navejar, Rosa –Presiding Co Chair
Sanders, Bob Ray – Co Chair
Session, Cory
Sherrod, Katie
Stimpson, Ty
Trevino, Jennifer
Woody, Rev. Tim
City Staff
Cooke, David – City Manager
Costa, Fernando – Assistant City Manager
Gonzales, Ron – Assistant City Secretary
Gutt, Michelle – Communications and Public Engagement Director
Madrid, Kelly – Assistant City Attorney
Parker, Mattie – Chief of Staff (Mayor’s Office)
Rush, Angela – Human Relations Administrator
Washington, Valerie – Assistant City Manager
Consultants
Andrews, Leon (by phone) – Director of Race, Equity And Leadership (REAL) for the National League of Cities (NLC)
Tucker, Estrus –Independent Consultant

Absent:

Task Force Members
Kirkland, Bishop Mark
McDonald, Judy
Vasquez, Monica

Welcoming Remarks

Ms. Navejar, Presiding Chair of the Race and Culture Task Force, began welcoming remarks by thanking her fellow Race and Culture Task Force members for attending and making a commitment to work towards the goal of making recommendations to the City about improving race and cultural equity in the city of Fort Worth. Ms. Navejar turned the floor over to her fellow Co-Chair Lillie Biggins.

Ms. Biggins, Co-Chair of the Race and Culture Task Force, President at Texas Health Harris Methodist Fort Worth and native Fort Worthian, began her introduction by also thanking her fellow Race and Culture Task Force members for attending and expressing that she hopes her fellow Task Force members see their participation as an opportunity to participate in the Task Force's important work.

Rabbi Bloom, Co-Chair of the Race and Culture Task Force, Rabbi to the Congregation Ahavath Sholom, member of the Mayor's Faith Based Cabinet and Compassionate Fort Worth, began his introduction thanking everyone for joining in the day's Task Force meeting. He explained that he views the work of the Task Force as "holy work." He then explained that the universal word for peace is shalom, with the word being derived from the root word shalem which means "unity." The only way he believes that Fort Worth can have peace is to have a unified city and he looks forward to having unity with the Task Force and with all Fort Worth residents.

Mr. Sanders, Co-Chair of the Race and Culture Task Force, journalist, and Director of Communications for the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce, introduced himself and explained that his family has a long history with Fort Worth that goes back more than 150 years, and further explained that he has seen racial and equity issues come and go during his lifetime in Fort Worth. He then noted that this year is the 50th anniversary of Fort Worth's civil rights ordinance and subsequent creation of the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission (Commission) – the first of its kind in the state of Texas at that time. Also, thirty (30) years ago, after protests at City Hall, the City passed an ordinance prohibiting the City from doing business with companies that had ties to South Africa. He hopes that the Task Force comes up with similar actionable items.

David Cooke, Fort Worth City Manager, thanked everyone for their time and for agreeing to serve on the Task Force. He stressed that the City is here to help the Task Force in any way needed.

Prayer for the Community

Rabbi Bloom led the prayer for the community.

Self-Introductions

Ms. Navejar asked that everyone introduce themselves and began with Fernando Costa.

- **Fernando Costa** – Mr. Costa is an Assistant City Manager with the City of Fort Worth, and is assigned as principal staff contact for the Task Force. He shared that if you have ideas about improving harmony in the community- share those with the Co-Chairs. If you have complaints about the food and/or meeting space-share those with him.
- **Angela Rush** – Ms. Rush is the City of Fort Worth’s Human Relations Administrator. She serves as staff liaison to the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission and the Mayor’s Committee on Persons with Disabilities, as well as having oversight of the staff charged with the enforcement of the federal, state and local anti-discrimination laws in housing, employment and public accommodations.
- **Michelle Gutt** – Ms. Gutt is the Director of Communications and Public Engagement for the city of Fort Worth. Ms. Gutt will help facilitate and promote communication with the public and media regarding the meetings and work of the Task Force. Ms. Gutt will also provide communication tools that can be used to promote community engagement around the work of the Task Force.
- **Rev. Tim Woody** – Rev. Woody serves as Pastor of City Life Church, is a member of the Mayor’s Faith Leaders Cabinet and Chair of Compassionate Fort Worth – which is based on volunteerism, unity and compassion.
- **Jennifer Trevino** – Ms. Trevino is a management consultant, a member of the City Plan Commission, and a member of the Zoning Commission.
- **Ty Stimpson** – Mr. Stimpson is a prosecutor in the Criminal Division of the Tarrant County District Attorney’s Office and has been recently assigned to the new Elder’s Fraud Division.
- **Katie Sherrod** – Ms. Sherrod is an independent writer and producer, Communications Director for the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth. Ms. Sherrod also provides political commentary for WFAA and has lived in Fort Worth since 1969.
- **Cory Session** – Mr. Session serves as Vice President of the Innocence Project in Texas. The Innocence Project is responsible, during the past ten (10) years, for thirty (30) exonerations out of Dallas and Tarrant County. His brother, Tim Cole, was the first posthumous DNA exoneration in U.S. History. He hears from all sides – his wife is a police officer and his sister is a former city attorney for the City of Austin. He actively engages (“poke”) any governor and they poke him back – there is a good relationship.
- **Dr. Terri Mossige** – Dr. Mossige is Principal of Paschal High School. Dr. Mossige said that she feels blessed to be asked to be a part of the Task Force and is excited about its potential. Agrees that the work of the Task Force is “holy work.”
- **Roxanne Martinez** – Ms. Martinez is a marketing consultant at Rock Star marketing, Fort Worth native, and has served on several nonprofit boards and her neighborhood association board.

- **Arturo Martinez** – Mr. Martinez serves as Director of Creative Services for Tarrant County College and as Chair of the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission. Mr. Martinez is also a lifelong resident of Fort Worth.
- **Rattana Mao** – Ms. Mao works at Comerica Bank and business owner of R&D Occasions. Thirty four (34) years ago her parents fled Cambodia and landed in Fort Worth.
- **Nima Malek** – Mr. Malek is a project designer at Jacobs Engineering and is excited to be a part of the group.
- **Yolanda Harper** – Ms. Harper is a native Fort Worthian and is excited to serve on the Task Force with her former principal and with a former classmate. Ms. Harper works for Blue Zones, but she will be representing the community and herself, as a business owner, on this Task Force.
- **Bob Goldberg** – Mr. Goldberg is Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth and Tarrant County. The Federation is a Jewish social service organization that has served Fort Worth since 1936 working to ensure the well-being of our community. Mr. Goldberg is honored to be a part of the Task Force and is looking to work towards building a stronger community.
- **Miriam Frias** – Ms. Frias works at Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital and manages the Business Health Services area. She has served on several boards including the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Wellness Coalition.
- **Robert Fernandez** – Mr. Fernandez grew up on the south side of Fort Worth. Has served on numerous City boards and commissions over the years, as well as several task forces. Mr. Fernandez served on the Gang Task Force which addressed the rise in gang activity during the 80's and 90's. Most recently he served on the Diversity Task Force which led to many changes in how we treat people here in the City.
- **Walter Dansby** – Mr. Dansby is retired as Superintendent of the Fort Worth Independent School District, lifelong Fort Worth resident, and spent twenty one (21) years with the school district. He is committed to this process as he introduced Courageous Conversations at the school district which also focused on race and culture. Mr. Dansby is looking forward to working with the Task Force to find solutions to help the city move forward.
- **Charles Boswell** – Mr. Boswell is a lifelong resident of Fort Worth and graduated from TCU. Most of his career was with the City of Fort Worth - thirty-one (31) years- and retired in 2008 as Fort Worth City Manager. Worked for State Senator Wendy Davis and serves on the executive team of the Tarrant Area Food Bank. He is excited to be on the Task Force and looks forward to the opportunity.
- **Kelly Madrid** – Ms. Madrid is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Fort Worth. Ms. Madrid is a labor and employment attorney for the City and is filling in for Laetitia Brown who is assigned to the Task Force as a resource in case there are any legal questions.
- **Ron Gonzales** – Mr. Gonzales is Assistant City Secretary for the City and is filling in for Mary Kayser (City Secretary). Mr. Gonzales explained that part of the work of the City Secretary's Office is to handle board and commission processes, and task forces fall under that category. He explained that if the Task Force has any questions about the agenda or the posting process, or about the Texas Open Meetings Act, the City Secretary's Office will be happy to assist.

- **Estrus Tucker** – Mr. Tucker is serving as lead consultant to the Task Force and is a lifelong Fort Worth resident from the Lake Como community. Mr. Tucker co-founded Liberation Community serving the Northside, Como and Poly communities. During the past seventeen (17) years he has served as an independent consultant working around the country, and places beyond this country, in areas of leadership development, civic engagement and racial reconciliation. He designed the Welcome Table model in cooperation with William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation which has been used, and continues to be used, in places such as Mississippi, Northern Ireland and South Africa.
- **Leon Andrews** (by phone) – Mr. Andrews is with the National League of Cities (NLC) in Washington, D.C. NLC is a membership organization that works with cities across the country. Mr. Andrews is the Director of Race, Equity, And Leadership (REAL) for NLC. Mr. Andrews and NLC are excited to be a part of the efforts in the City to address race and equity.

Texas Open Meetings Act Training

Mr. Gonzales explained that the City's Ethics Board classifies task forces in the same category as boards, commissions and committees. Therefore the Race and Culture Task Force members are required to take Texas Open Meetings Act training provided by the Texas Attorney General's office. All members should have received an email from the City Secretary about the training and in the email is a link for members to access the training. When the training is complete, members are given a number that they will need to note in order to print off a certificate that needs to be provided to the City Secretary's Office. Each member has been given ninety (90) days to complete the training. The ninety (90) day deadline for Task Force members to complete the training is October 30, 2017. If a member has previously taken the training for another board and commission or entity, and the member has the certificate available, please provide the certificate to the City Secretary's Office.

Task Force Charge

Mr. Costa provided information on the resolution, adopted by City Council on August 1, 2017, appointing members to the Task Force on Race and Culture and outlining the charge of the Task Force:

- **Community Conversations** – Engage Fort Worth residents through the use of community conversations about race and culture. These conversations will be held throughout the city of Fort Worth, hosted by diverse organizations, and will cover a wide range of topics of direct relevance to race and culture. Due to the sensitive nature of the conversations, trained facilitators will be utilized to ensure that the conversations are productive and as fruitful as possible. Task Force members will have the opportunity to help craft the format for the conversations. It is anticipated that these conversations will take place over several months.

In addition to the community conversations, additional avenues will be provided for community engagement. It is anticipated that the Task Force will host a couple of town halls, and the City's Communication and Public Engagement Director, Michelle Gutt, will work with the Task Force to provide additional communication and engagement tools for those residents that may not wish to attend meetings, but would still like to be involved and provide input.

- Assessment of Disparities – Leon Andrews, with the National League of Cities will work with the City to gather and analyze data regarding City services, to determine if City services are being delivered equitably across all segments of the population. Though much of the data collection and analysis work will be performed by City staff and consultants, the Task Force will also have a role to play in interpreting the data.
- Leadership Training – The training will be a joint effort between the National League of Cities, City staff, Estrus Tucker and the Task Force. The training, focused on issues about race and culture, will be directed at elected and appointed officials, department heads, City staff, front line managers, and possibly key community leaders. The purpose of the training is to ensure that these individuals will be better informed and better skilled when issues arise.

Task Force Mission and Vision

Rabbi Bloom explained that the Task Force on Race and Culture Co-Chairs decided on the following mission and vision in order to provide a cohesive direction for the Task Force:

- Mission: “Listen, learn, build and bridge in order to create an inclusive Fort Worth for all residents.”
- Vision: “Fort worth will become a city that is inclusive, equitable, respectful, communal, and compassionate.”

Code of Ethics

Kelly Madrid, Assistant City Attorney, explained that the City’s Code of Ethics can be found online¹, and that there is a specific section that discusses Boards, Commissions and Task Forces. In particular there is a provision that no member of the Task Force, of which he or she is a member of, can appear on their own behalf, before the City Council on a matter over which the Task Force has been assigned. The purpose of this is to ensure that the work and reports of the Task Force are being done in cooperation with all Task Force members and presented in complete context, so that there is no confusion on behalf of the City Council on whether the Task Force member is presenting their individual perspective or the views of the entire Task Force. The Chairs of the Task Force should be responsible for presenting recommendations to the City Council.

Format for Community Conversations

Mr. Tucker discussed the co-creation of a process by which the Task Force can convene, deliberate and give sufficient feedback that will lead to recommendations - and do so in a reasonable period of time.

Mr. Tucker further explained that the format of the community conversations will develop out of some the ways that the Task Force members will learn while engaging at their meetings. Ideally small groups

¹ (http://www.amlegal.com/codes/client/fort-worth_tx/, select View Code – PART II: CITY CODE - CHAPTER 2: ADMINISTRATION - ARTICLE VII: CODE OF ETHICS)

will be utilized as they allow, in a reasonable amount of time, an opportunity to hear multiple voices and perspectives. The conversations about race and culture will be complex and challenging, and it is important that these conversations be held in a way that invites unique perspectives that lead to recommendations that the Task Force can champion and frame.

Mr. Tucker noted that it is important to recognize that there are many people and organizations in Fort Worth that share kindred missions and sentiments— racial equity and cultural harmony- and that engage in credible and demonstrative activities. The first step is identifying ten (10) host organizations, selected by specific criteria, who will host a series of three (3) community conversations consisting of two (2)-hour dialogue, not debate. Specific guidelines to facilitate dialogue will be provided. The conversations will target about 20 to 30 residents. One criterion for host organizations will be their capacity and ability to identify and attract diverse residents so that the Task Force can ensure that they have sufficient reach and diversity.

The first session will begin with a gathering of the larger group to set the tone and establishing group norms, and then participants will be divided into small groups of three (3) where participants will respond to provocative, open-ended questions. During these community conversations an appreciative protocol will be utilized using open ended questions such as “What do you love about the place you call home?” and “What is working in Fort Worth?” These questions will invite the voices of diverse residents. It is from these community conversations that the Task Force will glean a broad diversity of perspectives in which to frame the Task Force’s recommendations. The process will be refined as the Task Force receives feedback.

Session two (2) will begin with the question “What are the critical issues and or serious problems that you have experienced in Fort Worth?”

Session three (3) will be framed with the question “What are the key strategies for positive change that you will support?” or “What opportunities for improvement matter most to you?”

Arrangements for All-Day Work Session

Mr. Tucker discussed the format for the all-day retreat, and mentioned questions that Task Force members will be asked to give feedback on: “What do you need, as an individual person, to be engaged and hopeful?”; “How do you understand your role and responsibilities?”; and, “What do members need, in regards to process, structure, resources and tools to carry out their responsibilities?”

Mr. Tucker then told the story of a small enclave of five (5) blind men that were given the opportunity to experience first-hand what an elephant was. Each blind man had a different perspective on what the elephant’s characteristics were based on their interaction with it. Mr. Tucker explained that the purpose of the story was to show that, like the blind men in the story, every individual brings their own unique perspectives to an issue/situation and how important it is to listen to these different perspectives to better come to a collective understanding. Through this collective understanding and

community engagement, the Task Force will be able develop possible solutions that will advance us as a city.

Mr. Costa noted that date for the all-day work session is Monday, September 25, 2017, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The session will be held at the Botanic Garden Center. Mr. Costa explained that an invitation has already been sent out for the session, and asked that the Task Force members confirm their attendance.

Small Group Discussion

The Task Force members were broken into small groups and asked to reflect on the question: “What do you need to be engaged and hopeful in this process?” Each group was then asked to report out to the full Task Force.

Group 1: Expressed that they don’t want the work of the Task Force to be window dressing and that City Council will be open to hearing things that they might not want to hear, and taking actions that they might not take on their own. They stressed that the process needs to allow for candor, as the answers will come from the community. They also expressed hope about outcomes based on the diversity of the Co-Chairs as well as the Task Force.

Group 2: Questioned whether the City has sought feedback from other cities that have tackled similar issues – in particular best practices and lessons learned. This group also noted a concern that it is important to have tools that will help the Task Force members and facilitators handle difficult/testy participants and that there must be transparency.

Group 3: Noted the importance of self-reflection and that there should be a need and desire to learn about communities that Task Force members may not be a part of. This group also emphasized the need to engage youth and expressed that they are hopeful about resolutions to address issues in Fort Worth communities.

Group 4: Stressed the importance of safety and respect. The Task Force will hear many passionate voices and it is important to understand that everybody has a voice and perspective and that people need to feel safe sharing their voices. The group noted how important it is to listen to other perspectives; that everyone is at the table, and that everybody’s voice is heard.

Group 5: Emphasized the importance of trust. The group also noted a need to know the back story and facts. The further noted that in order to know where we are going we need to know where we have been. They are hopeful about positive outcomes and a desire that the community goes back to loving and respecting one another.

Additional comments and questions from Task Force members:

- How do we engage those that don’t believe anything is wrong in Fort Worth? Do we even try to engage with them and try to explain the issues?

- Comments on social media indicate that people are upset and want to see results. How do we involve those on social media?
- A group like the Task Force on Race and Culture is long overdue. There is a lack of diversity in Fort Worth that has led to a breeding ground for distrust and anger. We don't want to engage with the same folks that are always at the table. We have to have diversity, otherwise we will have division.

The Co-Chairs closed the small group discussions with the following comments/observations:

Ms. Biggins asked how many in the room were committed to a "go-forward strategy." She further elaborated that failure is not an option. This Task Force must focus on solutions as the community is hurting.

Rabbi Bloom commented that it is time for Fort Worth to get rid of the old "Fort Worth Way" and forge a new "Fort Worth Way." No one wants to fail. The Task Force members must use their voice, actionable items and their hearts to bring change. Rabbi Bloom expressed that none of the Co-Chairs would have agreed to serve, if they didn't believe that the City will look at what the Task Force recommends and do something with its recommendations. Rabbi Bloom also provided a quote on religion and race that was given in 1963 by good friend of Martin Luther King Jr. He hopes that the quote will provide a moral perspective for all of the Task Force members:

God is everyman's pedigree. He's either the father of all men or of no man. The image of God is either in every man or in no man. God's covenant is with all men. We must never be oblivious of the equality of the divine dignity of all men. For the moral person to fully recognize the divine image in the face of every person...racist acts become unthinkable.

Mr. Sanders expressed his hopes that this Task Force will leave a legacy, not a report that is received and filed.

Ms. Navejar commented that each Task Force member was chosen for a reason...because each member represents different mindsets and cultures. It is important that the Task Force members participate fully and do their jobs, or we won't have an outcome. It is time for all of the Task Force members to unite together. She further explained that during the all-day session each Task Force member will be given an opportunity to talk about their feelings and really be truthful about why each member is here and what efforts are necessary to get the outcomes needed for our city.

Next Meeting

Ms. Navejar noted that there will be a Task Force meeting on August 28, 2017, starting at 5 p.m., at the Botanic Garden Center – Oak Hall. The Center is located at 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard.

The all-day session will also be at the Botanic Garden Center, on September 25, 2017.

An agenda for the August 28th meeting will be sent out next week.

Mr. Costa commented that the Task Force members may want to decide at their next meeting which organizations should be invited to host community conversations. There should be approximately ten (10) organizations that have great influence in the community, recognized for their work bringing people together across different barriers, have an acceptable venue for the conversations, and have the ability to attract participants representing diverse groups.

With there being no further discussion or agenda items, the meeting was adjourned.