



MINUTES

TASK FORCE ON RACE AND CULTURE

Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), Exhibit Hall
1700 University Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76107
Monday, November 20, 2017 – 5:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Rosa Navejar, Presiding Co-Chair of the Race and Culture Task Force, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

In attendance:

Task Force Members
Biggins, Lillie – Co Chair
Bloom, Rabbi Andrew – Co Chair
Boswell, Charles
Dansby, Walter
Fernandez, Robert
Frias, Miriam
Goldberg, Bob
Harper, Yolanda
Kirkland, Bishop Mark
Martinez, Arturo
Martinez, Roxanne
McDonald, Judy
Mossige, Dr. Terri
Navejar, Rosa –Presiding Co Chair
Sanders, Bob Ray – Co Chair
Sessions, Cory
Sherrod, Katie
Stimpson, Ty
Trevino, Jennifer
Woody, Rev. Tim

City Staff
Brown, Laetitia – Senior Assistant City Attorney
Costa, Fernando – Assistant City Manager
Fitzgerald, Joel – Police Chief
Gutt, Michelle – Communications and Public Engagement Director
Ramirez, Charlie – Assistant Police Chief
Rush, Angela – Human Relations Administrator
Washington, Valerie – Assistant City Manager
Consultants
Tucker, Estrus –Independent Consultant

Absent:

Task Force Members
Malek, Nima
Mao, Ratana
Vasquez, Monica

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Sanders thanked the Task Force members for doing an incredible job.

Rabbi Andrew Bloom wished everyone an early happy Thanksgiving. He shared a quick story ending with the statement “If we are able to build a forest of equity and community among all of us during our daily lives, not only will we succeed in making Fort Worth a better place but even more so in making the entire community and our world a better place, not only for us not only for those living in the Fort Worth but wherever good people live.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the October 2nd Town Hall and October 16th Task Force meeting were approved.

AGENDA ITEMS

Update on Community Conversations

Mr. Costa noted that the conversations are going well and staff has received positive feedback from the participants. There have been 22 series of community conversations hosted by 29 different civic organizations from Fort Worth. There are three separate conversations scheduled to start in the next few days continuing into December, and will be sponsored by six additional host organizations. There will be a planning meeting scheduled with the Potter's House after Thanksgiving. Staff is still trying to contact the Great Commission Baptist Church to host a series of conversations. Ms. Navejar asked for comments from Task Force members that have participated in a community conversation. Several Task Force members shared their concerns about being too restrictive in participating in the community conversations, staff not contacting individuals who have registered online to participate in conversations, host organizations having the opportunity to define the criteria on who speaks and how, that the process is taking too long, that the Task Force has enough information to move forward with recommendations, the conversations locations are not available to the public, the requirement to attend all three series of conversations is deterring individuals to participate, and finally a member noted what would be wrong with the councilmembers attending cultural sensitivity training.

Mr. Tucker responded to the members' concerns and questions by emphasizing that it was never stated that the Task Force could not act on what is already known or that the Task Force could only act or make a recommendation once all of the community conversations were completed. The main focus of a host organization was to listen to people. The process of participating in a community conversation can be redesigned to allow anyone to participate. Mr. Tucker suggested gathering and offering all of the ideas and suggestions of the Task Force members and then meeting in 45 days to analyze which ideas or suggestions were successful. Rabbi Bloom suggested that Task Force members email their suggestions to Mr. Costa and all of the Task Force Co-Chairs.

Update on Conversations among City Officials

Two weeks ago the City Council, along with various City officials, completed a series of three conversations about race and culture. Mr. Costa noted that the response received from the participants was generally positive. In the next few months Mr. Tucker and the National League of Cities (NLC) will be conducting leadership training on race and culture for the City Council, department heads and assistant directors.

Briefing on Assessment of Disparities in Service Delivery

Mr. Costa stated that the City has begun the process of collecting data from various City departments about disparities in the delivery of municipal services. Some municipal services will be easier to track than others with respect to the influence of race and culture. For example, the Police Department collects extensive data on how their activities affect residents from different races and ethnicity. However, not all City departments track data as thoroughly. For example, individuals are not asked for their race or ethnicity when applying for a library card. The City is trying to track if individual's race or ethnicity may influence the delivery of any or all City services. The data will be collected, analyzed and presented to the Task Force. The Task Force will assist with analyzing and interpreting the data to form logical conclusions.

Briefing on 3E (Equity, Equality, Everyone) Action Plan and Coleman Report

Ms. Navejar invited Valerie Washington – Assistant City Manager (ACM), Police Chief Joel Fitzgerald, special guests – Dr. Michael Bell, Bishop Billy George, Bishop Robert Sample and Rev. Kyev Tatum to have seats in the front. Ms. Washington provided a brief overview of her September 25th presentation to the Task Force on the 3E Action Plan and the Coleman Report.

Police Chief Fitzgerald shared a few words on working with the authors of the 3E Action Plan to facilitate better communication between the Police Department and members of the community who are leading the charge for racial equity. As a result, a checklist of the action items on the 3E and Coleman report was created. The items on the checklist were reviewed on whether successful strides had been made in any particular area.

Bishop Billy George, one of the authors of the 3E Action Plan, shared a few words on the why the plan was created.

Rev. Kyev Tatum, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and one of the authors of the 3E Action Plan, shared a few words of encouragement to the members of the Task Force, stating that their work is not in vain regardless of those who are frustrated of not being invited to participate. He continued with sharing how he became involved with the creation of the plan.

Dr. Michael Bell, one of the authors of the 3E Action Plan, shared a few words on how he was involved with the creation of the plan. He thanked ACM Valerie Washington for her assistance and involvement.

Bishop Robert Sample, one of the authors of the 3E Action Plan, thanked the Task Force for the opportunity to speak. He briefly stated that he operates with hope and confidence that, when good intentions are put in place, you can see results. He continued with sharing how he became involved with the creation of the plan and also thanked Ms. Washington for her support and being a link between them and Police Chief Fitzgerald.

Briefing on National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice

Police Chief Fitzgerald provided an overview of the 3E and Coleman Reports, spoke briefly on why the 3E was created, noted the feedback he received from the 3E authors in regards to the implementation of the plan and communication from the office of the Chief, spoke briefly on why the Coleman Report was requested and the findings of the report, and briefly reviewed the recommendations from the 3E Plan and the Coleman Report. Finally, the Chief presented his strategic initiatives, addressing each key action items of the 3E Action Plan and Coleman Report – procedural justice, body-worn cameras (use and policies), use of force, and de-escalation training.

In response to a question regarding why the police officer's body camera footage was not immediately released in the Jacqueline Craig incident, Chief Fitzgerald noted that there are statutes prohibiting the release of a Police officer's body camera footage when juveniles are involved. Laetitia Brown, Senior Assistant City Attorney, provided additional information on the statutes.

(A copy of Chief Fitzgerald's presentation is available on request.)

Briefing on National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice

Police Chief Fitzgerald presented a report on procedural justice highlighting current training progress, including the requirement that police officers receive mandatory procedural justice training. He noted that all of the changes to the Police Department's policies and procedures are tested. The presentation also included a list of community engagements activities that the Police Department has participated in and a list of departmental goals. Finally, Chief Fitzgerald concluded his presentation with stating that he will take every opportunity to stand before folks who are happy- or not happy- with the Police Department, to create a sense of trust in the Police Department and in the City. He stated that he is aware that it is impossible for everyone to walk away happy but he wanted most people to understand that the Police Department would be dedicated to ongoing open and honest communication with all members of the community.

(A copy of Chief Fitzgerald's presentation is available on request.)

Briefing on Local Enforcement of Senate Bill 4 Concerning Immigration

Assistant Police Chief Charlie Ramirez provided a brief overview on Texas Senate Bill 4 (SB4). He continued with information on the City's new policy that was created for SB4. The new policy tracks when and how the officer asks for immigration status. This allows the Police Department to track officers who may be over using the requests for immigration status. The policy requires officers to call in and create an incident report. If an offense report is not created, then a supervisor must be called to the scene if any action is taken. This also allows the Police Department to track the time spent on all immigration checks. Assistant Chief Ramirez emphasized that it was important for the Police department to create a policy that would not restrict officers, but would allow the department to track and audit all encounters with citizens. Pamphlets were created in English and Spanish with information on SB4, citizen rights, and how to report if a citizen believes they are being racially profiled. He noted that neighborhood police officers (NPOs) and supervisors have been trained and tested on the new policy.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Ms. Navejar asked Task Force members to review the list of upcoming meetings.

CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Navejar summarized the requests made by Task Force members –

- Additional town hall meetings.
- Host community conversations at community centers.
- Workshop on white privilege.
- Respond to online registration submissions in a timely manner.

She encouraged the Task Force members to contact the co-chairs about concerns, as soon as possible, and not waiting until a Task Force meeting.

Ms. Biggins also encouraged Task Force members to contact the co-chairs with feedback. She noted that the feedback they received today will significantly change the structure.

Mr. Sanders noted that he still has several questions that he will send to the Police Chief and will share with the Task Force members.

Rabbi Bloom stated that he was thankful for all of the Task Force members because together they can make a difference in the City. He hoped that in Thanksgiving 2018 they will be able to give thanks that they have been able to make a difference.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Navejar asked Bishop Kirkland to close the meeting with a prayer for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.