

**Howard County Racial Equity Task Force
Economic & Workforce Development Meeting Minutes
Chair: Candace Dodson-Reed
February 23, 2021**

Panelists Present – Candace Dodson-Reed, Ayesha Holmes, Leonardo McClarty, Minah Woo, Nat Alston, Pamela Pina, Aaron Johnson, Lauren Marra (Facilitator), Michael Harris (D2), Ashley Alston (D2), Theo Wimberly (Council Staff).

Guests Joining/Attendee: Mike Kelly and Kari Staddon

Not Present: Jonathon Studdard, Roger Barnes, Darren Atwater, and Young Ran Smith.

Opening: Candace completed attendance and introduced the meeting.

Discussion Points:

Candace started with the approval of last meetings' minutes

- Moved to approve the meeting minutes from February 10th
 - Second by Leonardo
 - Approved by everyone

Lauren reviewed the agenda and explained the topic of discussion

- Income inequality and economic mobility in Howard County
- Q & A after presentation
- Discussion of next steps after presentations

Minah introduced the speaker, Mike Kelly

- Mike is the Executive Director of Baltimore Metropolitan Council, a group that has been a leader in research and informing data driven decisions in the Baltimore Metropolitan area
- Mike has helped with HoCo Rise

Mike began his presentation

- **Refer to presentation**
 - Explained who the Baltimore Metropolitan Council was and what they do
 - Explained who was in their jurisdiction
 - Showed a bar graph that depicted the overall growth and diversity of Howard County
 - From 1990-2017
 - Showed a bar graph that represented the population distribution of Howard County
 - There is a fair amount of integration compared to other jurisdictions
 - Showed the Minority Population Census Report
 - Compared Howard County to Baltimore City
 - Before looking at income, we must look at educational attainment
 - Presented a chart that showed the median annual earnings by educational attainment
 - The more education you have, the more income you are going to have

- Howard County had the highest compared to Maryland and the United States
 - Presented a chart that showed educational attainment disaggregated by race in Howard County
 - As a whole, about 32% of Howard County's population has a college degree and 32% have another degree higher
 - Asian community has the highest attainer at the graduate level
 - Black community is roughly on par with the Howard County population in regards to college degree. A little behind for graduate degrees
 - Hispanic and Latinx communities are on the lower end of the spectrum
 - White population is more or less on par with the Howard County population
 - Little bit more on the higher end and little less on the lower end
 - Compared to the other jurisdictions, the non-white community has higher education levels in Howard County
 - Presented a chart that showed educational attainment of Native/Foreign born population
 - Foreign/immigrants have the highest for less than high school
 - Foreign/immigrants also have the highest for graduate school degree
 - Highly educated immigrants moving to Howard County
- Showed a graph about the median household income disaggregated by race from each jurisdiction
 - Asian household has the highest income
 - White households is the second highest
 - Black household has a higher income than Hispanic/Latinx community
- Summary Points
 - **Refer to presentation for specifics**
 - While minority incomes are higher in Howard County than other jurisdictions, there are still clear gaps between the White/Asian residents and Black/Hispanic & Latinx residents
 - Howard County is growing and attracting higher educated individuals

Questions

- Candace- Do you have any data that looks at employment? Is the workforce of Howard County reflective of the diversity of the County?
 - Mike Kelly- In general, yes. They have data that looks at this information, but it is hard to look at workforce solely at the County level. Workforce is really a regional issue. Overall, employment distribution by race is representative of Howard County's diversity.
 - Minah- Recalls a report that showed how Howard County exports out higher educated individuals to other areas like Fort Meade, Washington, D.C., etc. They import a lot of the lower workforce.
 - Mike Kelly- Outflow of work is about evenly split between the D.C. and Baltimore area. Howard County exports more workers than they import. Mike will share a link that breakdowns race and areas of work within Howard County.
 - Candace- Diversity of leadership and organization improves the bottom line. Wanted to know if Howard County shared that same correlation, so they can see where they could make recommendations.

- Mike- there are other metrics, but the data is not readily available just yet.
- Leonardo- Another thing that may be interesting to look at is the sense of things being relative. Compared to the region, the County has grown fast. However, compared to how the County has historically grown, the County isn't growing at the same rate. Certain segments of the growth population aren't necessarily fully high income populations that are growing. He would like to continue looking at this. He talked about spending affordability and where people leave and work. References Dr. Richard Clinch and suggests inviting him.
- Mike shares his screen to show a graph of telework eligibility in Howard County. It shows the raw number of jobs and the breakdown of race.

Meina introduces the next speaker, Kari Staddon

- Kari is the Director of Strategic Impact for United Way of Central Maryland
- She has been a champion for all families to prosper and flourish
- She promotes self-sufficiency and child care

Kari began her presentation on the ALICE Report and the Benefits Cliff Study

- **Refer to presentation**
 - Explains ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) and the jobs they have
 - Essential workers
 - Latest Maryland report is based on 2018 data
 - 3 critical trends from the report
 - **Refer to slide for specifics**
 - Rise of ALICE households is on the rise and cost of living for ALICE households is increasing
 - Minimal increase in job wages in Maryland
 - Families move in and out of ALICE
 - Kari shared the graphs from the United Way website
 - ALICE levels in Howard County
 - **Refer to website for specifics**
 - Breakdown by zip code
 - Families with children
 - One-parent households
 - Breakdown by race and ethnicity
 - Household budgets in Howard County
 - Child care is expensive in Howard County
 - Benefits Cliff study
 - Study on potential loss of public benefits to working families resulting from small increase in earned income
 - Presented a chart that shows the share of population that identifies as Black, Non-Hispanic
 - From 2018
 - 18% of population identifies as Black
 - For child care subsidies, 81%
 - Intended to bolster Maryland residents, but it does the opposite
 - Deeper Dive
 - Suggests using the links on slides

- Talks about Covid impact on ALICE communities

Lauren opened up to questions

- Ayesha- She is working with No Kid Hungry, and the benefits cliff (referring to Kari's presentation) is more salient with this time. Unemployment made them choose between unemployment benefits and SNAP benefits
 - Kari- Yes, just a hundred dollars off could throw someone off the ALICE list
- Candace- Are there things you would recommend to help you in your work?
 - Kari- They have dedicated staff that works with policymakers that help. She thinks that it takes both public and private support to help nonprofits that are trying to close these gaps. Also, being aware of the gaps that exist. Recognize the barriers. United Way is focused on addressing the expensive childcare in Howard County
 - Ayesha- There is a bill that is moving through the legislative right now called hunger free grant campus program. The idea for this program is to create an incentive grant program at the state level that will allow for meal plan dollars to saved, reduction work, and other resources. She will share more information with the group. Looking at upward mobility and its barriers.
- Minah- She made an observation from Mike's presentation that the zip code breakdown had areas that were darker, like 50-70% filled with minority. When you juxtaposed that map with the United Way ALICE map, it was a parallel. Do you have any insights regarding this observation?
 - Mike- Relative to other jurisdictions, Howard County is wealthier and more diverse. However, they are not immune from racial segregation (which leads to economic segregation). Howard County has the resources to solve a lot of these problems. He thinks it is important for these groups to keep challenging themselves to focus on inclusion. These racial income and employment gaps can't be legislated. It ultimately has to happen organically and generationally. It comes down to your network of people.
- Minah- Have you noticed any good policies or practices that other counties have instituted that address people struggling coming out of those benefits? They experienced benefits cliff, but not falling back in because there are other safety nets around.
 - Kari- She does not know, but this might be a question for the public policy people at United Way of Central Maryland. This is not an area that she studies very much. She knows that Montgomery County is the only other jurisdiction in the state of Maryland where the cost of living is higher, and the numbers of the survival budget are higher than they are in Howard County. Howard County is number 2. She suggests looking into Montgomery County. Many of these programs are mandated by the state and federal government.
 - Example: Child care is a voucher provided by the state. The ceiling on the income for eligibility for child care stops at 72,000. There are people are below ALICE but above the eligibility. They are somewhat in the middle.
 - Kari mentions the County Government because they are supporting United Way as they build the child care center
- Question: DO NOT KNOW WHO IS SPEAKING (Pamela?) How reliable is the reporting of the Latinx community? How are we accounting for migrating populations, who aren't always reporting to census data?
 - Mike- Their data is largely based off of ACS off census data. It is the best data that they have and they make some adjustments.
 - Lauren- Is that the same data you use?

- Kari-Believes that it is the same.

Lauren thanked the speakers and transitions to the next agenda point

- Asked the group how they felt about the data they have been given? Do you have the information that you need for recommendation?

Lauren opened up for discussion Round Robin style

- What struck you most about the information you heard?
 - Leonardo- He is still trying figure out where this is going. He did not have an “aha” moment yet.
 - Candace- These presentations were helpful because the data really showed the racial wealth gap. You know that this is a problem, but seeing the numbers is different. There is something there, but not quite sure what it is. Noticed that there is a lack of data on the diversity of leadership.
 - Ayesha- There might be data on this at the Community Foundation. She doesn’t mind reaching out for this data
 - Minah- We need to look at income inequality and mobility access, but also we need to look at infrastructure. Leadership is a big thing.
 - Candace- Uses Columbia Association (CA) as an example. They have an all-white Board. We could suggest required reporting to the County
 - Ayesha- It comes down to creating consciousness
 - Leonardo- Part of Columbia Association’s Board is the Village Centers. So how do we change the bylaws or how do we get people of color to run for these positions?
 - Ayesha- With some grants, they have DEI requirements. In doing that, they are setting expectations. From a County perspective, there are ways to set the expectation and creates a timeline. This could also be done for the private sector and procurement.
 - Candace- Loves Ayesha’s ideas. There are creative ways to help people become aware. Suggest to the County to have better partnerships with organizations to hold them accountable.
 - Leonardo- Bigger companies have the resources to provide and collect the data. Smaller and medium size companies have perhaps not have to gone through this before. CA might not be the best example because it is elections
 - Candace- In order for the culture to change in Howard County, they will have to help some people get there.
 - Nat- On CA, he was one of the consultants. CA’s Board is comprised of the Village Centers. Recruitment of individuals that live in those village centers of diverse backgrounds to decide whether or not they want to run for a Board position. This may not be a prime example. On the other side of private sector, it is up to a particular company how they approach diversity and inclusion on their Board.
 - Anecdotal evidence:

- Nat has experience with corporate America and is the chairman for the National Association of African Americans and Human Resources. They are a Black HR group that has a DEI component. The rise of chief diversity officers in companies raises questions as well. Who do they report to, is it box checking, and do they have the power or the influence to change diversity and inclusion at the C suite or Board level? If the company is not dedicated to DEI, then the culture change won't happen.
 - Candace- Suggests a recommendation that requires a certain percentage of your Board to be reflective of the community. Would this work and get at the issue?
 - Leonardo- For private companies, they might ask "or what?"
 - Nat- People don't do what's expected; they only do what's inspected. They need accountability.
 - Candace-Is there a way to incentivize them to think about diversity, equity, and inclusion? They are on Howard County land and pay taxes.
 - Minah- We have to understand what our scope of influence could be. We could be creative with grants or tax incentives. What would be meaningful enough for business?
 - Ayesha- Figuring out the incentive piece for those who do not focus on DEI is important. Social awareness piece could also influence.
 - Candace- mentions Community Partnership Grant Program.
 - Ayesha- Perhaps asking Fran about these incentives
 - Leonardo-Start around the things we could control. We do not want to get on a slippery slope
 - Lauren- Proposes having a discussion at the next meeting and put these thoughts on paper.
 - Leonardo-Clarifies the task. Looking at what programs and incentives that would keep companies in align with DEI.
 - Lauren- Yes, looking at what the Council can do as well.
 - Leonardo will take on this task
 - Minah- Leadership cultivation in younger generations and of people who are not typically represented in the Board. They not only "fill the color seat" but actually contribute
 - Lauren asked Meina to take the lead on this
 - Leonardo shares personal testimony on this subject
 - Mentions Joan
 - When he looked at the chamber's board, there was not a lot of diversity before he got there. He was worried that was why he was there. But ultimately, it comes down to who is the best person of the job. They have had conversations and now the Board is really diverse. They look at diversity beyond the gender and ethnicity lens, but through the lens

of “are you a small business or a corporate business?” The executive director has influence on the Board

- Ayesha- Joan will be at the next meeting

Lauren reviewed the timeline

- Monthly subcommittee meeting
 - Other groups are suggesting doing small work groups to split up the recommendation drafts
- Design and cluster interest form at a later time
- Large group roles compared to small group roles
- Draft recommendation begins March-May
- Compiling a list of recommendations by June
- Share final report in July

Lauren reviewed homework

- They will share the presentations from Fran, Larry, Yolanda, Mike, and Kari
- Ask that each member sets aside an hour to review material and think about what is striking you and potential recommendations
- Next meeting will be ACS speakers and Leonardo
 - After that meeting, there will be a short survey about who is interested in what topical area

Lauren shared reminders

- Public Hearing is March 4th from 6:00pm-8:00pm
 - Lauren invites everyone to invite other people
- March 10th is the next meeting 6:00pm-8:00m
- Proposing April meeting is April 7th from 6:00pm-8:00pm

Theo shared updates

- Council is having their monthly meeting on March 3rd. Each chair was asked to come before them and give an update
 - Lauren- The Co-Chairs will draft up a paragraph to present an update. Should subgroup members come?
 - Theo- They could come as attendees, but they would like Chairs to be there

Candace adjourns meeting