

Howard County Racial Equity Task Force
Economic and Workforce Development: Meet and Greet Minutes

Chair: Candace Dodson-Reed

Wednesday November 18, 2020 at 9:00 AM

APPROVED: 12/9/2020

Panelist present: Candace Dodson-Reed, Aaron Johnson, Jonathan Studdard, Nat Alston, Pamela Pina, Roger Barnes, Lauren Marra (Facilitator), Ashley Alston (D2), Michael Harris (D2), Charity Respass (Council staff), Theo Wimberly (Council staff)

Not Present: Ayesha Holmes, Darin Atwater, Leonardo McClarty, Minah Woo, Young Ran Smith

Opening:

Charity Respass stated the meeting is being recorded.

Candace Dodson Reed called the meeting to order 9:06 AM.

Dr. Opel Jones provided a brief welcome.

Candace Dodson Reed asked for brief introductions.

Introductions:

Candace Dodson Reed – Chief of staff to the president and UMBC and the executive director of office of equity and inclusion. Prior to that, served in Howard county government for about 8 years in the administration, most of that time as Deputy Chief of staff. Participates in volunteer work in the community and from Howard County.

Charity Respass – works in the County Council's office; facilitates getting the meetings set up and has worked for Howard county for 16 years.

Nat Alston –Howard county resident for 32 years, CEO and president of a consulting company called the Horizons Group; Vice Chairman the Equal Business Opportunity Commission; is the chair and founder of a Ujamaa business roundtable.

Aaron Jackson – Senior at the University of Pennsylvania; grew up in Howard county and worked with EcoWorks for 2 non-consecutive years.

Ashley Alston – native of North Carolina; moved to Elkridge in June and excited to get to know all the faces that are part of the Task Force; District Aide to Dr. Jones of District 2.

Lauren Marra – Founder and CEO of Groundwork Partners; purpose is to facilitate the subgroup through the research phase, synthesizing and sense making to report development and helping support the Task Force in preparing recommendations for the County Council. Worked in social impact consulting for 15 years with an emphasis in racial justice through the lens of economic mobility and educational equity.

Michael Harris – Special Assistant to Dr. Jones of District 2; provides resources and tools to ensure the Task Force is successful in their endeavor.

Pamela Pina –works with Howard EcoWorks and former UMBC alumni.

Roger Barnes – operates Lewrox Enterprises, a business development and consulting enterprise located in Howard County; been involved in the business fabric of the county and worked in social and community activism. Served under the last three administrations and works with the African American community roundtable.

Theo Wimberly – staff to Howard County Council; work with all 5 council members in drafting legislation; worked for the county for about 20 years and worked with Dr. Jones and councilmember Rigby to draft the Racial Equity Task Force legislation

Jonathan Studdard – lifetime Howard County resident; retired CEO president and happy to add some thought leadership around minority and racism discrimination.

Discussion: Monthly meeting, website and Vice Chair position

Candace resumed the meeting agenda by discuss the Monthly meeting schedule

Task Force discussed what days and times are best for their schedule and it was decided to provide Wednesdays and Thursdays around 5:30 PM or 6 PM for start time.

Ashley A. discussed the council website and Task Force email address; it was stated that the page would be live the date of the all-Task Force Kickoff meeting. The email address will also be provided in case Task Force members or the public would like to provide additional information to any of the subgroups.

Candace then moved the meeting to discuss the Vice Chair position; provided feedback to the subgroup that in the event she misses a meeting, or for any reason her schedule does not permit her attendance, then having someone step in to assist will be helpful. Lauren Marra, facilitator also provided language in which she would support the chair and any others that at times may take on a leadership role. At the time of discussion, no members were prepared to take on the position, but left room for it to be a discussion in future meetings.

Closing:

Candace then asked for questions.

Theo provided comments that the meeting would be recorded; as a reminder the body is a part of the County Council and reminded the subgroup that all the meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act and at any time the public can and will be watching.

Question from Roger Barnes: What is the duration of the subgroup work?

Answer from Candace Dodson-Reed: submitting a report in July for approval in August

Candace closed the meeting out at 9:22AM with no further questions and a reminder to all that the Kickoff meeting will be on Thursday November 19th from 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM.