

City of Staunton
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission
Onboarding Retreat
Saturday, November 23, 2024
R.R. Smith Center, 2nd Floor Lecture Hall
20 S. New St.
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

AGENDA TOPICS

9:00 a.m. - Introductions, Housekeeping, Overview of the Day, Approve Minutes from October 16, 2024 DEI Commission Meeting

9:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Discussion - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (*Facilitated by Siri Russell, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Community Partnerships, [UVA School of Data Science](#)*)

11:15 – 11:30 a.m. Break

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Commission Structure and Logistics

The following documents can be found in the onboarding notebook provided to you at the first meeting:

1. *Resolution Establishing Commission*
2. *By-Laws *These will require revision and re-adoption at a future meeting if the Commission desires to have by-laws**
3. *Remote Meeting Participation Policy*

Additional Attachment:

4. *A Guide to the Freedom of Information Act for Members of Boards, Councils, Commissions, and Other Deliberative Public Bodies*

12:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Teambuilding Exercise

**1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. – Review and Discussion of DEI Commission Report and Recommendations
(short breaks will take place during this portion of the day)**

[Link to full commission report and recommendations](#)

The following documents can be found in the onboarding notebook provided to you at the first meeting:

5. *Timeline, Deliverables, Who We Are*
6. *Recommendations One-Pager*
7. *Recommendations & Findings, full report*
8. *DEI Update to City Council, Dec. 8, 2022*
9. *DEI Public Hearing, Oct. 25, 2023*
10. *DEI Findings & Recommendations to City Council, Dec. 14, 2023*
11. *City Council DEI Public Hearing City Council, Feb. 8, 2024*

3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. - Post Reflection, Next Steps, Etc.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

Meeting

October 16, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Dr. John Chiles Activity Room

Irene Givens Administration Building

Montgomery Hall Park

PRESENT: Lou Boden
Sabrina Burress
Cecilia Carpenter
Mark Jeter
Charles Lawson
Raven Moore
AnhThu Nguyen
Keisha Nicholson
Jennifer Tripeer
Susan Venable
Jordan Zipser

ABSENT: Alice Woods, Council Liaison

ALSO PRESENT: Leslie Beauregard, City Manager
Morgan Smith, City Manager's Office

City Manager Leslie Beauregard opened the October 16, 2024 DEI meeting.

1. Approval of Minutes:

- a. Jennifer Tripeer moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2024 DEI Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Sabrina Burress and carried unanimously.

2. Introductions/Ice Breaker

- a. New and returning commission members shared a little about their backgrounds and reason for being interested in DEI with each other.

3. Discussion of Onboarding Mini Retreat

- a. The commission discussed feedback regarding onboarding that occurred at the August meeting of the returning members.
- b. The commission then broke into three groups to discuss what the focus should be for the mini retreat. Consensus was had among the three groups and their full reports are attached at the end of this document as "Attachment A."
- c. November 23, 2024 was chosen as the date for the retreat.

4. Other Business

- a. Housing Strategy Work Group – Leslie gave an overview of what the Housing Strategy Work Group was and asked for a volunteer from the DEI Commission to serve. Susan Venable will join the work group.

48 **b.** Sabrina nominated AnhThu Nguyen and Mark Jeter to serve as the next chair and vice-
49 chair of the DEI Commission, respectively. Keisha Nicholson moved to approve the
50 nomination, which was seconded by Jordan Zipser. The motion was carried unanimously.
51

52 **Adjournment**

53
54 The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

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Attachment A Onboarding Notes

Group 1

- Review of Report
 - What will the City do
 - What will the Commission do
- Beginning conversations about tangible outcomes
 - Defining success
 - Begin project plan
- Review of DEI in general
 - What is it
 - Why we do it
 - How we do it well/right
- Avenues for community engagement
 - Legality of communication process
 - Easy, relatable, drives excitement
- Budget information
 - Other funding streams
- Ideas incubator
 - Whose got the skills
 - How are they best used
- Mapping community partners, liaisons, stakeholders
 - What works
 - What's already being done
- Review of the equity network
- Understanding FOIA

Group 2

- Info about processes, funding and how the DEI commission fits in that structure (high level)
- Scope of the commission
- Priorities
 - What does the planning process look like and how do we drive it
 - What to work on first, second ...
- Review commission recommendations
- From original group
 - Lessons learned
 - What worked well
- Community outreach and communication
- Municipal interconnectivity
 - Outreach to other boards and commissions
 - Education of the boards, commissions and city staff
 - Building Bridges and working in cooperation with their ongoing and upcoming efforts

Group 3

- Reach and scope of Commission
- How do other cities “do” this?
- How do we want to structure ourselves around our priorities, specifically accessibility.
 - Subcommittees, etc.?
 - Liaisons to existing groups?
- Community Engagement Plan
 - Transparency
 - Community building
- Review of bylaws and report/recommendations
- Funding?

A Guide to the Freedom of Information Act for Members of Boards, Councils, Commissions, and Other Deliberative Public Bodies



Prepared by the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council

Policy Statement of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

By enacting this chapter, the General Assembly ensures the people of the Commonwealth ready access to public records in the custody of a public body or its officers and employees and free entry to meetings of public bodies wherein the business of the people is being conducted. The affairs of government are not intended to be conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy since at all times the public is to be the beneficiary of any action taken at any level of government.

Unless a public body or its officers and employees specifically elect to exercise an exemption provided by this chapter or any other statute, every meeting shall be open to the public and all public records shall be available for inspection and copying upon request. All public records and meetings shall be presumed open, unless an exemption is properly invoked.¹

Public Records

What is a public record?

For the purposes of FOIA, a public record is all writings and recordings that consist of letters, words, or numbers, or their equivalent, set down by handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photography, magnetic impulse, optical or magneto-optical form, mechanical or electronic recording, or other form of data compilation, however stored, and regardless of physical form or characteristics, prepared or owned by or in the possession of a public body or its officers, employees, or agents in the transaction of public business.²

All public records are open to the public unless a specific exemption in law allows the record to be withheld and a public body invokes such exemption.

What about retention of public records?

¹ See Subsection B of § 2.2-3700 of the Code of Virginia, the first section of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

² See the definition of "public records" in § 2.2-3701.

Public records must be retained according to retention schedules set by the Library of Virginia pursuant to the Virginia Public Records Act (§ 42.1-76 et seq.). The length of retention depends on the content of the record. After expiration of the applicable retention period, the records may be destroyed or discarded.

What about electronic mail?

Emails that relate to public business are public records, regardless of whether a home or office computer or phone is used and regardless of whether the communication is through text or a form of social media or other electronic application. It is the content of the record, not the equipment or account that is used, that controls.

Emails that qualify as public records must be retained as required by the Virginia Public Records Act. For additional information, see the Freedom of Information Advisory Council handout entitled "Email: Use, Access, and Retention" available on the FOIA Council website.

Public Meetings³

What is considered a meeting under FOIA for public bodies?

For the purposes of FOIA, a public meeting of a public body is any gathering, including work sessions, of the constituent membership of the public body convened physically or through electronic communication means pursuant to § 2.2-3708.2 or 2.2-3708.3 where the members discuss or transact public business of the public body. This meaning applies:

- To the public body or to an informal assemblage of (i) as many as three members or (ii) a quorum, if less than three, of the constituent membership;
- Wherever the gathering is held; and
- Regardless of whether minutes are taken or votes are cast.

NOTE: This requirement also applies to any meeting, including work sessions, of any subgroup of the public body, regardless of how the subgroup is designated (e.g., a committee, subcommittee, task force, work group, panel, etc.).

What is public business under FOIA?

For purposes of public meetings, public business means any activity a public body has undertaken or proposes to undertake on behalf of the people it represents.⁴

*What is **not** a meeting under FOIA?*

- The gathering of employees of the public body; or
- The gathering or attendance of two or more public body members at:
 - Any place or function where no part of the purpose of such gathering or attendance is the discussion or transaction of any public business, and such gathering or attendance was not called or prearranged with any purpose of discussing or transacting any business of the public body, and no discussion or transaction of public business takes place among the members of the public body;or

³ See the definition of "meeting" in § 2.2-3701.

⁴ *Id.*

- A public forum, informational gathering, candidate appearance, meeting of another public body, or debate, the purpose of which is to inform the electorate or to gather information from the public and not to transact public business or to hold discussions relating to the transaction of public business, where no discussion or transaction of public business takes place among the members of the public body, even though the performance of the members individually or collectively in the conduct of public business may be a topic of discussion or, debate, or question presented by others at such public meeting.

Specific Aspects of Public Meetings

Minutes: Minutes are required for any meeting of the public body or a subgroup of the public body.

Voting: No secret or written ballots are allowed. Votes must be taken at a public meeting conducted in accordance with FOIA.

Polling: Individual members may be contacted separately (one-on-one) to ascertain their positions by phone, letter, or email, so long as the contact is done on a basis that does not constitute a meeting.

Closed Meetings: A closed meeting is allowed only for certain limited purposes as specifically authorized by FOIA in § 2.2-3711 or other law and requires a motion stating the purpose, the subject of the closed meeting, and the specific Code section that authorizes the closed meeting. See § 2.2-3711 of FOIA for allowable purposes for closed meetings and §§ 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of FOIA for procedures for holding a closed meeting.

Electronic Meetings: Meetings held through electronic communication means are allowed for public bodies under heightened procedural and reporting requirements depending on the type of electronic meeting (i.e., a meeting during a declared state of emergency, an in-person meeting with individual member(s) using remote participation, or an all-virtual public meeting). See §§ 2.2-3708.2 and 2.2-3708.3 of FOIA for specific requirements for meetings held under these circumstances.

Email and Meetings: The Virginia Supreme Court has held that emails may constitute a "meeting" as defined under FOIA if there is simultaneous email communication between three or more members of a public body.⁵ Avoid "reply all" as a general rule. For additional information, see the FOIA Council handout entitled "Email and Meetings" available on the FOIA Council's website.

Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council

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⁵ See *Hill v. Fairfax Cnty. Sch. Bd.*, 284 Va. 306, 727 S.E.2d 75 (2012); *Beck v. Shelton*, 267 Va. 482, 494, 593 S.E.2d 195 (2004).

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Updated July 2024