

Meeting Agenda
April 16, 2025
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission
School Board Conference Room
2nd Floor City Hall
116 West Beverley St.
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Proposed Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes

DEI Commission Meeting – March 19, 2025

2. Discussion of DEI Commission Recommendations and Report Implementation

- a. Discussion of Action Items and Recommendations (**Attachment 1**)
- b. Subgroup Discussions (Split into subgroups)

3. Other Business

- a. Building Bridges for the Greater Good Event – April 26th, 1pm, Booker T. Washington Community Center
- b. Housing Strategy Public Input Session – Saturday, April 12th, 10am, Library 2nd Floor Meeting Room
- c. Other Business from Commission Members

Adjournment

1. Subcommittee Groupings and Definitions

Attachment 1

-The **Data and Research subcommittee** will advise city council and City departments on best practices for promoting inclusive and equitable policies reflective of our diverse community. This subcommittee will continue ongoing data collection and research and draft a work plan to address the recommendations published in December 2023.

-The **Community Connections subcommittee** will connect, engage, and build relationships with community members and organizations. This subcommittee will plan and lead community engagement efforts and connect the broader community to city initiatives and community resources.

2. City priorities for Commission Recommendations

-After discussion with Weldon Cooper Center, City staff have identified the following DEI recommendations that could be quickly prioritized.

- B2: Best practices for onboarding/training for city employees and commissions
- C2: Researching models for the Staunton Equity Network
- Best practices on community building, engagement, trust building – how can we improve how the city is communicating and engagement with community members who are not usually engaged or trusting

3. Engagement with the City of Staunton Comprehensive Plan

The Commission discussed hosting a community engagement event to increase awareness of the Comprehensive Plan process and boost engagement and input from our underrepresented/ marginalized communities.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

Meeting

March 19, 2025

6:00 p.m.

School Board Conference Room

City Hall, 2nd Floor

PRESENT: Sabrina Burress
Cecelia Carpenter
Mark Jeter, Vice Chair
Charles Lawson
AnhThu Nguyen, Chair
Keisha Nicholson
Susan Venable (remote participant)

ABSENT: Raven Moore
Jordan Zipser

ALSO PRESENT: Alice Woods, Council Liaison
Leslie Beauregard, City Manager
Josh Knight, Engagement & Communications
Morgan Smith, City Manager's Office

AnhThu Nguyen called the meeting open at 6:03 p.m.

AnhThu stated “we received a request from Susan Venable to participate remotely in March 19, 2025 DEI Commission meeting due to a medical matter that prevents her physical attendance at the meeting. I will now entertain a motion for her to participate.”

Charles Lawson moved to allow Susan to remotely participate in the March 19, 2025 DEI Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

AnhThu has Susan to state the location from which she was participating. Susan responded that she was at her home. AnhThu asked the commission and the audience if they could hear Susan. The response was affirmative.

1. Approval of Minutes

Sabrina Burruss moved to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2025 DEI Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Charles and carried unanimously.

2. Discussion of Current Commission Vacancy

- a. *Resignation of Jennifer Trippeer and Lou Boden.* AnhThu has conversations with both Jennifer (resigned Feb. 18) and Lou (Feb. 7) about their decision. Both will continue to support the Commission, but at this time are unable to physically attend the meetings and events. They are strong advocates and have promised to stay engaged in the work.
- b. *Timeline to Fill Vacancies.* Leslie shared that since Jennifer and Lou both had terms that ended on June 30 and that the Commission is still within required membership, the Commission will wait to fill the seats with a start date of July 1.

50
51 **3. Discussion of DEI Commission Recommendations and Report Implementation**

52 *a. Report Out – Discussion with Weldon Cooper Center/Moving Forward with*
53 *Recommendations.*

- 54 i. After discussion with Weldon Cooper Center, city staff have identified the following
55 DEI recommendations that could be quickly prioritized.
56 1. B-2: Best practices for onboarding/training for city employees and commissions.
57 2. C-2: Researching models for the Staunton Equity Network
58 3. Best practices on community building, engagement, trust building – how can we
59 improve how the city is communicating and engaging with community members
60 who are not usually engaged or trusting.

61 *b. Subgroups Discussion and Proposed Definitions*

- 62 i. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed definitions of two subgroups brought to
63 the commission by AnhThu.
64 1. The **Data and Research Subcommittee** will advise City Council and city
65 departments on best practices for promoting inclusive and equitable policies
66 reflective of our diverse community. This subcommittee will continue ongoing
67 data collection and research and draft a work plan to address the
68 recommendations published in December 2023.
69 2. The **Community Connections Subcommittee** will connect, engage, and build
70 relationships with community members and organizations. This subcommittee
71 will plan and lead community engagement efforts and connect the broader
72 community to city initiatives and community resources.
73

74 Cecelia Carpenter moved to approve the definitions as presented above. The motion was seconded
75 by Keisha Nicholson and the motion carried unanimously.
76

77 *c. Discussion of Action Items*

- 78 i. Commission members are to contact AnhThu and Mark with the information on
79 which subcommittee they would like to serve.
80

81 **4. Other Business**

82 *a. Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Meetings*

- 83 i. Leslie provided a quick background as to what the Comprehensive Plan is, and
84 commission members noted that there is definitely a gap in knowledge about what
85 the document is.
86 ii. The commission discussed hosting a community engagement event to increase the
87 awareness of the Comprehensive Plan process and boost engagement and input from
88 our underrepresented/marginalized communities.

89 *b. Discussions about City Commitment to DEI*

- 90 i. The following comment was prepared by staff and Mayor Michele Edwards in
91 regards to her commitment to DEI and given in response to a request from Crystal
92 Graham with the Augusta Free Press.
93 1. The Staunton City Council formalized the DEI Commission at its retreat in 2024,
94 and both city staff and a council member are assigned to support its work. As of
95 now, I am not aware of any discussions among Council regarding changes to the
96 commission's status as a valued part of our local government. I can only speak
97 for myself, not for other councilors or the city, but I remain committed to the
98 mission and values of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission in

99 Staunton. The commission continues to meet and is working through the report's
100 findings and recommendations. The DEI commission's agendas and minutes can
101 be found on the city's website: www.staunton.va.us/equity.

102 ii. Susan, and others, shared their concerns about people interacting with the
103 commission differently, but all members agreed that they will continue to do the
104 work and be prepared to pivot when necessary.

105 *c. Other Business from Commission Members*

106 i. Cecelia shared that Augusta Health has reaffirmed their commitment to
107 diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion. Also, that the mobile clinic
108 has been funded, so more community members will have access to health
109 care.

110
111 **Adjournment**

112
113 The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.