Meeting Agenda
November 19, 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 – October 15, 2025
   DEI Commission Retreat Minutes and Report – November 8, 2025

2. **Subcommittee Report Outs**
   a. Community Connections
   b. Data and Research

3. **DEI Commission Retreat Review**

4. **Annual Written Report to City Council**

5. **Going 'Round the Circle!**

6. **Other Business**

Adjournment

Subcommittee Groupings and Definitions

-*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.

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

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

Meeting
October 15, 2025
6:00 p.m.
School Board Conference Room
City Hall, 2nd Floor

PRESENT:	Sabrina Burress
	Cecilia Carpenter
	Mark Jeter, Vice Chair
	Ian Callahan
	Charles Lawson
	AnhThu Nguyen, Chair
	Keisha Nicholson
	Belinda Osario Polgar
	Jordan Zipser
ABSENT:	Susan Venable
	Leslie Beauregard, City Manager
ALSO PRESENT:	Alice Woods, Council Liaison
	Josh Knight, Engagement & Communications

AnhThu Nguyen called the meeting open at 6:09 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Sabrina Burress moved to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2025 DEI Commission meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Keisha Nicholson and carried unanimously.

2. Subcommittee Report Outs

a. Community Connections – the subcommittee shared that they have been discussing the cadence of the DEI newsletter and are thinking quarterly may be a good fit with the option to release ad hoc if necessary or skip. They want to be certain there is worthwhile content. They plan to table at the Winter Market on Dec. 6 and Dec. 13. Anyone on the commission is welcome to join. The group continues to discuss their larger community event and hope to have some discussion at the DEI Commission retreat. They shared their appreciation for everyone's bios and photos for the commission website. They also reported that tabling at Pride was very positive. There was some confusion that attendees didn't realize they were a separate commission and not city employees. They got several questions in their suggestion box, but have not had a chance to go through them. There was discussion of how they might answer questions received in the suggestion box: newsletter, website, etc. The group asked if there was something they could design that would look more representative of the DEI commission for tabling events instead of generic City of Staunton.

There was a separate discussion of how the subcommittee may support other boards and commissions. They wanted to be careful not to oversell what the DEI Commission can offer. The initial iteration of the DEI Commission did have talking points and questions they used when the spoke with community partners. It was brought up that they hope to start small and then branch out as an advisory capacity and can also serve in a data capacity. The group prioritized staring with the Library Advisory Board. Cecilia explained at the hospital it was often just about making the connection with different groups and then how to help would unfold organically. Everyone agreed that the subcommittee could reach out on behalf of the commission. It was suggested that help should be offered from a 300k foot view. The subcommittee also said 45 minutes to 75 minutes would be good for brainstorming and planning an outreach even during the retreat.

b. Data and Research – The subcommittee reported that they have been reviewing current city onboarding and training practices. They mentioned that it is generally thin but see it as an opportunity to build it out. They hope to provide the city with a scaffolding for rolling out DEI education for staff. The subcommittee also recognizes that education city staff on the city's demographics and history could be powerful. They are hoping to include the framework as part of the report in December to City Council and hope to see progress throughout next year.

3. DEI Commission Retreat – November 8

a. Pre Retreat Subcommittee Homework

The commission discussed plans for the upcoming retreat, which will focus on setting priorities and developing an implementation timeline for the next six months as well as preparing for the annual report. Each sub-committee will lead discussions on their proposed initiatives and receive input from the full commission. Facilitators with VRSA will attend to provide context on DEI efforts in other municipalities.

4. Annual Report to City Council

The annual report will be presented to City Council on December 11, with AnhThu and Mark presenting. The Nov. 8 retreat will serve as a key preparation point for finalizing the report's content. Sub-committees may be asked to contribute brief write-ups or materials, with details to be determined following the retreat. The report will focus on transparency, outlining the commission's accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, and future timelines.

5. Going 'Round the Circle!

- **Oct. 29, 6-8 p.m. at Staunton High School**: Stronger Together Mental Health Fair
- The group congratulated each other on successful PRIDE and NAACP events

6. Other Business

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

Retreat
November 8, 2025
9:00 a.m.
RR Smith Center, 20 S. New Street
2nd Floor Meeting Room

PRESENT:	AnhThu Nguyen, Chair
	Mark Jeter, Vice Chair
	Sabrina Burress
	Natalie Slater
	Ian Callahan
	Charles Lawson
	Belinda Osario Polgar
	Susan Venable
	Jordan Zipser
	Cecilia Carpenter
ABSENT:	Sabrina Burress
	Keisha Nicholson
	Alice Woods, Council Liaison
ALSO PRESENT:	Leslie Beauregard, City Manager

AnhThu Nguyen called the retreat open at 9:07 a.m.

A retreat report is attached.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission

Retreat Report

November 8, 2025

1. **Team Time – Getting to Know Each Other and Working Together**

   Commission members introduced themselves and talked about why the DEI Commission is important to them.

2. **Moving Forward with the Current Landscape**

   Commission discussed the challenges with current national political landscape and the work of DEI in that larger landscape. And the landscape is something that should be monitored and managed.

3. **Break Out Session – Community Connections, and Data and Research Committees to Meet Separately**

   The Commission broke out in their two subcommittee – Data & Research and Community Connections – to discuss top work plan priorities from overall DEI Commission recommendations.

4. **Reconvene and Report Out from Committees**

   Community Connections

   Goal E

   - **Community Resources Event** – food insecurity; access; health; other resources that community members need to know about
     - Work with outside partners (SDDA, Community Foundation, CAPSAW, etc.)
     - City resources featured (news and emergency alerts, recruitment, information, various departments, etc.)
   - **Event for the Boards and Commissions**- an event for the city's Boards and Commissions to get to know each other, how can DEI can assist other boards and commissions, and they learn from them
   - **Crisis Messaging** – pushing out why this is important work

- **Youth Involvement** – getting with the School Board to have a "competition" - Art Competition with the school system and along with way, give out information about what DEI means

Data & Research -

<u>Goal B: - B1 & B2</u>

- How do they help get the city to the place with "best practices" and putting those in place, such as employee onboarding and hiring?
- Scaffolding Approach – three stages – Early, Established, Strong (see Attachment 1)
- Next steps, schedule meeting with City of Staunton and Human Resources to discuss feasibility of recommendations and proposed implementation (prior to formal report in January)

5. Finalize Strategic Plan of Action to Present to City Council

- Written report to be presented to City Council in January (8th)
- Possible Outline for report *(note – ensure that report covers the areas outlined in the adopted resolution that established the Commission)*
    i. This is where we came from/this is where we are now
    ii. Landscape of current DEI efforts – very brief
    iii. What has the DEI Commission been doing?
    iv. How are they doing on the recommendations report?
    v. Timeline update?
    vi. Composition of the Commission – showcase the webpage and the Commission
    vii. What are the next steps with the report?

6. Recap and Observations

- Looking forward to what's coming across the horizon – monitoring what is happening and keeping engaged with the community
- Feels like better alignment

Early	1	Not yet, or learning stage
	2	Planned but not started or in initial/pilot stages of implementation
Established	3	Working towards this but not fully achieved
	4	Fully Achieved
Strong	5	In place with evidence of its use (e.g., policies, procedures, robust evaluation plan)
	6	Practices are sustainable and ongoing and may be shared with others as “best practices”

Goal B: Promote Values of DEI in City Policies, Procedures and Staff Representation

Action B-1 Formally Review all City Hiring Practices Policies and Procedures related to DEI, including Staff Representation, Recruitment and Procedures
Action B-2 Develop a Standarized DEI-Specific Onboarding and Training for All City Employees, Boards, and Commissions

Competency: Recruit, hire, and develop a governmental workforce that reflects the populations and communities residing in Staunton

Early	1	Promote job specfiications and qualifications that emphasize value of experience in the local community and reflect the skills and characteristics to serve the broad community
		Develop inclusive job postings, that contain equal opportunity and anti-discrimination language
	2	Intentional and directed effort to share job postings with all community members and residents.
		Develop an equity or diverse lived experience job interview question bank to use using hiring process/interviews.
		If applicable, develop job role descriptions that allow candidates to highlight specific skillsets related to diversity and inclusion (e.g. working with specific populations) rather than generic examples
Established	3	Staff with community experience occupy community-facing positions and leadership roles.
		Workforce development efforts and goals incorporate the unique needs of community and residents (e.g. career pipelines, tuition reimbursement, support for education and career growth)
	4	Develop goals and metrics to assess progress in increasing staff diversity and equitable compensation.
		Written procedures exist to increase recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of staff reflective of populations served.
		Develop internal advisory/workgroups to develop, guide and implement diverse workforce recruitment efforts.
Strong	5	Staff diversity reflects the populations served at all levels of the organization.
		HR and hiring practices reflect reform of minimum requirements or qualifications to remove barriers for underrrepresented groups (e.g. allowing equivalent experience to substitute for formal education, and/or broadening options for educational credentials)
	6	Internal structure or hired position promotes workforce diversity (e.g. DEI Officer) through recruitment, hiring, and retention.
		Hiring managers receive equity-related training, including implicit bias training on a recurring basis.
		Periodic assessment and transparency around reviewing policies and procedures to ensure inclusion of diverse staff and prevention of turnover for staff with underrepresented backgrounds.

Competency:		***Provide standardized onboarding and opportunities for staff to learn and discuss issues related to equity and diversity and how to incorporate their learning into workplace and community practice.***
Early	1	Workplace policies support and generally encourage periodic training opportunities related to equity.
		Staff have the support to do their own research on equity practices if interested.
	2	Work with external partners to train department staff on their policies and practices (e.g. communication to diverse communities, outreach, cultural competency, implicit bias)
Established	3	Department-wide trainings, intra-departmental workgroups, and other programming related to equity available to all staff.
		Staff receive hands on training to respectfully and thoughtfully engage with underrepresented and marginalized communities
	4	Build sustainable workforce development plan to include equity-specific strategies for developing new and current staff (e.g. mentorship)
		Encourage working groups and opportunities for staff to engage and learn from one another regarding equity knowledge and practices (e.g. employee resource groups, affinity groups)
		Highlight and sustain community partnerships that will serve as collaborators or advisors in evaluation, review and improvement of policies and procedures.
Strong	5	Significant development and investment into workplace culture where DEI principles are fully embedded and reflected in policy. (e.g. funding for trainings and program development)
	6	All staff, including leadership, complete standardized onboarding on a recurring basis. Those in leadership positions have opportunities to regularly expand and increase their foundational knowledge.
		Assessment and competency of equity practices are assessed by leadership and advisory community partners, with a focus on transparency and communication with the broader public.