

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

Meeting

March 18, 2026

6:00 p.m.

School Board Conference Room

City Hall, 2nd Floor

PRESENT: Raven Bruno
Sabrina Burress
Ian Callahan
Cecilia Carpenter
Mark Jeter, Vice Chair
Charles Lawson
AnhThu Nguyen, Chair
Belinda Osario Polgar
Natalie Slater
Antwhon Suiter
Jordan Zipser

ABSENT: Leslie Beauregard, City Manager
Alice Woods, Council Liaison

ALSO PRESENT: Josh Knight, Engagement & Communications
Morgan Smith, City Manager's Office

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

1. Approval of Minutes

Sabrina Burress moved to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2026 DEI Commission meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Charles Lawson and carried unanimously.

2. Introductions

- Raven Bruno is new to Staunton, originally from Charlottesville. She believes that the Staunton community is welcome. She is a sociology professor at Piedmont Virginia Community College. She has two children, 10 and 13, in the Staunton City Schools. She believes that it is important to participate in DEI and that she wants to bring the lens of another to the commission.
- Antwhon Suiter is a native of this area, having lived in Fishersville, Waynesboro, and finally Staunton. He is a graduate of Staunton High School. He is working on earning his associate's degree from Blue Ridge Community College in Criminal Justice. He feels that the commission is a way to invest himself in the community. He does have four brothers.
- The commission then shared their names, title, and subcommittee.
- Subcommittee Overview: Members clarified the roles of the two primary subcommittees for new members. Community Connections – Outward-facing, connects the broader

community to DEI initiatives. Data and Research: Internal-facing, provides advisory support and data analysis for city-led initiatives.

3. Subcommittee Report Outs

- a.** Community Connections – the subcommittee shared that Fred Blanton from the Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee came to them with DEI concerns. He has requested that the commission support LCWAC by helping boost the event and taking his request for more city support to City Council.
 - i.** This conversation continued with how DEI can help other boards and commissions. This also brought the subcommittee to think about refocusing their mutual aid community event into broader outreach. There was discussion of integrating the needs and challenges of other boards and commissions into the DEI Commission’s formal recommendations to the city.
- b.** Data and Research shared that they’re in a holding pattern in regards to city onboarding. What would that content look like, where is it DEI related, etc. They would like to build a very basic structure with foundational education and more detail about the Staunton community. They want to talk about who joins that conversation and who in the community could provide education on DEI topics.
 - i.** The history of Staunton informs the work of the DEI Commission

4. Going ‘Round the Circle!

- a.** Earth Day is April 25, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Gypsy Hill Park
- b.** Trans Day of Visibility is March 31, 5 p.m. at the LGBTQ Center

5. Other Business

- a.** AnhThu encouraged everyone to take a look at the community survey to see what information that they can glean from the results.
- b.** Discussion ensued regarding the city using more inclusive language in their communication and working better with the deaf community.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.