

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

Meeting
April 15, 2026

6:00 p.m.

School Board Conference Room
City Hall, 2nd Floor

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

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

ALSO PRESENT: Josh Knight, Engagement & Communications

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

1. Approval of Minutes

Cecilia Carpenter moved to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2026 DEI Commission meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Ian Callahan and carried unanimously.

2. Discussion of DEI Commission Goals/Objectives

The commission discussed establishing a more frequent reporting cadence to City Council. While the current focus has been a single annual report, members proposed moving to quarterly updates to address timely community concerns and avoid diluting the commission's impact.

There was discussion regarding Section 6C of the bylaws and whether the commission has the authority to reach out to City Council more frequently. It was noted that the bylaws shifted once the commission became permanent.

The commission expressed a need for a systematic mechanism to document and track concerns brought forward by community members to ensure no voices were missed. Mark and AnhThu will reach out to Alice Woods to discuss best process for inter-report communications and invite her input at a future meeting.

3. Subcommittee Report Outs

- a. Community Connections – Following an inquiry from the Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Board, the subcommittee confirmed that environmental health disparities

fall within the DEI purview. Ian has coordinated to ensure the board connects with their liaison, Jeff Overholtzer. The commission is planning a “belonging event” in partnership with Staunton City Schools. Belinda and Jordan are scheduled to meet with Dr. Irizarry on April 20 to discuss opportunities with the downtown art center. To better facilitate outreach to other boards and commissions, the subcommittee has decided to pivot from a single large-scale event to an "invitation" model. Instead of a high-lift event, the commission will invite other boards to meet with them or schedule smaller outreach sessions to better accommodate various schedules.

- b. Data and Research – The subcommittee reported on their meetings with Jon Venn and Robin Wallace in Human Resources regarding the proposed training for employees. The subcommittee is mindful of the optics of regarding city funding and the challenges of mandated training. Initial "low-hanging fruit" for the subcommittee will include collaborating with HR on recruitment and having the DEI commission help distribute job postings to broader networks. Members have been invited to the next department head meeting to learn what specific training needs or concerns exist among city management. The subcommittee discussed potential names for HR initiatives, such as the "Staunton Equity Network."

4. Going ‘Round the Circle!

- Belinda reported on recent tabling efforts at the “No Kings” protest and confirmed she would be representing the commission at the Earth Day event on April 25 at Gypsy Hill Park from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- The LGBTQ Center is participating in Shop and Dine Out in Downtown with a space outside the Masonic building, featuring a drop-in center and chalk activities.
- The NAACP Prayer Unity Breakfast is scheduled for next week.
- Ian told the group of a yoga session scheduled at Heard at 9 a.m. on April 25. Summer classes are starting in May.
- Natalie told the group about the start of an Art Collective in Waynesboro.

5. Other Business

- The commission noted that several terms are ending in June.
- Members emphasized the need for a formal onboarding and off boarding process to ensure community contacts and momentum are not lost during leadership transitions.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.