



Planning & Development Division
Planning & Economic Development Department

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African Heritage Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 9, 2021, 5:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting –Web-Ex

Commissioners present: Jebbeh Edmunds, Verna Thornton, John Staine, Bernice Pepper, Breanna Ellison, Antonio Carter

Commissioners absent: Susie Green, Verna Thornton

Staff present: Mollie Hinderaker, Ben VanTassel

1. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting started at 5:35 PM.

2. Approve Revised Meeting Minutes for April 14, 2021 and Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2021

The minutes for the April 14, 2021 meeting were not approved, after discussion; City Staff was directed to provide revised language for the Commission to review prior to the June meeting. Changes were emailed to the Commission prior to the meeting for review and included as revised minutes in the meeting packet.

Staine/Edmunds to approve the revised April meeting minutes and the May meeting minutes. –
Motion passed 5:0

3. Public Comment

City staff mentioned that Deputy Chief Marquardt asked staff to remind the Commission that they are welcome to join the Committee to develop the Duluth Police Department Racial Bias Audit, which would include attending two meetings a month. If Commissioners cannot commit to the Committee, Deputy Chief Marquardt asked for recommendations of other community members from the African Heritage community. Staff said they would follow up by providing her contact information to Commissioners.

Chair Staine reported that he talked with the City's Public Information Officer, Kate Van Daele, about the city's process for working with media and providing information to the public. Commissioners requested that staff invite Van Daele to an upcoming meeting to speak about similar topics to the larger group.

Chair Staine stated that organizers of the NAACP's Juneteenth event are interested in support from the African Heritage Commission. Commissioners discussed the importance of supporting black-led events but also commented on the short-term nature of the request for support. Commissioners had questions for staff on what sponsoring events could look like moving forward.

Staine/Ellison to confirm the African Heritage Commission's support for Duluth NAACP's upcoming Juneteenth event. **-Motion passed 4:1, Carter opposed**

4. Commission Goals

a. Cultural Center

Commissioner Pepper shared a statement, which outlined a request that provided the history, context, and ideas for what a Community Center for the African Heritage community could look like in Duluth.

Commissioners reviewed a draft framework for a community building that was included as part of the meeting materials.

Commissioners Staine and Edmunds both cited examples of similar community centers in St. Cloud and in Minneapolis that the Commission could model after.

Commissioner Carter provided some background knowledge on what happened to the Institute for African American Awareness.

Staff were directed to explore grant opportunities and provide information to the Commission at upcoming meetings.

b. Community Engagement

No discussion

5. Subcommittees

a. Community Center/Grants (Pepper)

Discussion held earlier

b. Employer Engagement/Demographics and Data Research (Carter, Green, Thornton)

No discussion

c. Historic Preservation (Stain, Edmunds)

Staine and Edmunds requested that staff reach out for an update from the City Parks Department on the Waabizheshikana Heritage Trail Interpretive Plan, which was presented at a previous meeting.

- d. DCSI Law Enforcement Accountability Proposals (Staine, Green, Thornton)

No discussion

6. Next Meeting Topics (July 14)

Commissioners requested to continue to discuss goals at next meeting with an emphasis on the second goal of Community engagement.

7. Announcements

No discussion

8. Adjourn

Staine/Carter to adjourn at 7:11 PM.

Next meeting to be held virtually via WebEx on July 14, 2021 at 5:30 PM.