

Minutes

Inaugural meeting

Mayor's Equity Advisory Council

Wednesday October 21, 2020 4:00 pm

Via Zoom

Attendance

Council members: Steve Allard, Kevin Dougherty, Councilwoman Elsie Foster, Rivka Greenberg, Franklin More, Pastor Antoinette Gaboton-Moss, Kermit Moss Jr., Carolyn Timmons, Jeff Vardaro, John Wenz.

Staff – Harry Glazer, Joan Hullings.

Members of the public: Jeffrey Aaron, Abby Stern Cardinale, Lucinda Holt, Jessica Hunsdon, Sarah Kelley, Bruce & Debra Morgan, Austin Morreale, Peter Spool.

Briefing on Open Public Meetings Act

Borough Clerk Joan Hullings advised the group on the requirements of the NJ State Open Public Meetings Act, as well as expectations of the Borough for all Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

Election of Council Officers

The Mayor asked the group to identify members to serve as chair, vice-chair, and secretary. After some discussion, the group agreed to take this up at the next meeting and to invite self-nominations via email to Harry in the interim.

Review of By-laws of Preceding Group (HP Equity Commission)

The Mayor asked the group if they had any thoughts on the by-laws of the prior HP Equity Commission, in the interest of adopting some of them for this group. Group members offered a number of suggestions:

- It would be helpful to see minutes of the meetings of the prior group, to see if they felt they accomplished their objectives (JV)
- It would be useful to have the last chair of the prior group join this group, at a meeting, to share his/her perspective on the work of the group (KD) (PAGM); A council member countered that the prior group's written record should attest well to what they accomplished (CT)
- Assessing the state of policing in the Borough should be high priority objective of this group (JV); Useful input on this might be obtained from the Mayor Brill Mittler and Councilwoman Foster's ongoing contacts with Mayor Ras Baraka in Newark and Mayor DeLucca in Maplewood, on policing matters (GBM, EF).
- A related issue is access to police records (JV) New guidelines from the NJ State Attorney General on bias and access to discipline records may be very helpful in this regard (JW).
- If the group elects to spend significant time on policing issues, it should consider inviting a member of the HPPD leadership to join the group, so as to build bridges and invite their perspective (GBM)

- This group should be empowered to suggest policy and not just collect data (SA), particularly on policing issues and the town's budget for policing (JV)
- The group should clarify if there are any legal issues with seeking access to HPPD records, perhaps in consultation with the Borough Attorney. (FM) The Mayor may invite him to attend the next meeting (GBM)

Scheduling the next meeting

The group looked at a few dates and times and decided to hold the next meeting on Wednesday November 11th

At 6:00 pm

Via Zoom.

Some members of the group expressed interest in having the group meet more often than monthly, to stay on top of issues as they develop.

Public Comment

Peter Spool raised concerns about the transparency of the recent open public forums with HPPD leadership, suggesting that agendas be published in advance, they not require all questions to be submitted in advance, and they share more fulsome reports. He also asked that the public get to hear any presentations by the Newark and Maplewood Mayors. Additionally, he expressed concern about the promotion of the police chief and captain, from acting to permanent, stating he felt the public was not advised of this change.

Lucinda Holt advised that she was the last chair of the prior group and would be happy to meet with this group; she has already reached out to Julie Castellano, the secretary of the prior group, seeking minutes. She suggested that this group also review the DeLacey Davis report.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm

Minutes prepared by

Harry Glazer

Aide to the Mayor

October 22, 2020