

Cedar Falls Racial Equity Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, October 6, 2021 – 4:00-5:30 PM

Cedar Falls Public Safety in person and via Video Conference

To protect against the spread of COVID-19, this meeting was also offered via video conference.

Task Force Members Present: Frank Darrah (Task Force Chair); Kelly Dunn (Task Force Vice Chair); Melissa Heston; Lisa Sesterhenn; Paul Lee; LaTanya Graves; Wilfred “Micky” Johnson; Eashaan Vajpeyi

Facilitators: Aimee Vinaird-Weideman

City Staff/Elected Officials Present: Jennifer Rodenbeck; Katie Terhune; Kevin Rogers; Craig Berte; Bailey Schindel; Mayor Rob Green

Members of the public were also present via video conference.

Absent: Andy Pattee; Will Frost; Felicia Smith-Nalls

1. Call to Order:

Chair Darrah called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

2. Roll Call/Attendance:

City Staff Terhune took roll call.

3. Approval of 09-29-21 Minutes:

Task Force Member Johnson moved the minutes be approved; seconded by Task Force Member Lee; approved unanimously.

4. Agenda Review/Changes:

Chair Darrah and Facilitator Viniard-Weideman reviewed the meeting agenda; there were no changes.

5. Review of Draft Report

Facilitator Viniard-Weideman stated edits from the September 29th have been completed as well as revision/review by each subcommittee of its work and a new draft provided to Task Force members; she asked for any clarifications/questions about this version of the report, and stated small edits (grammatical, etc.) can be passed along to her.

Task Force Member Lee asked if the space held for a letter from the Mayor was needed; is a letter forthcoming; Mayor Green stated there will be a memo/letter from him when report is presented to Council to receive and file but is not part of the report as presented to Committee of the Whole; he suggested the Task Force could write an introductory memo or letter in that space. Task Force Member Lee stated it is important to make it known the Task Force and report were requested by Mayor, both now and for future reference; Mayor Green stated that directive will be indicated in the memo/letter he provides when the report is sent to be received and filed. Discussion by the Task Force confirmed removal of the placeholder letter and item from table of contents for Mayor’s letter, and the Task Force does not have time to write a new letter/memo to add in its place; the Mayor’s memo/letter will be attached to the report when it becomes available to the public.

Task Force Member Vajpeyi addressed editing inconsistencies in the bullet point style(s) and if the first letter after should be capitalized or not; and commas in the housing section. Facilitator Viniard-Weideman presented the final edits to the report as: removing “draft” from page(s); removing “letter from Mayor” from Table of Contents and placeholder page; copy-edit draft without changing content; and the eventual addition of Mayor’s letter/memo.

6. Discussion of Presentation to City Council

Facilitator Viniard-Weideman addressed the content of the presentation as it follows the report and the process of the presentation to Council. Business and Finance Operations (FBO) Director Rodenbeck stated she requested the Task Force presentation be the first item on the Committee of the Whole (COW) agenda for October 18th, 2021. She stated the Task Force should plan on a tentative start time of 5:10 PM in Council Chambers and a Zoom option will be provided. She stated the agenda is finalized the Wednesday prior to the meeting and offered to forward copies of it to the Task Force members. She stated the Task Force will have an approximate presentation time frame of 60 minutes if that works, and that the presenters (Task Force Members Lee and Sesterhenn) could stand at the podium or sit at the table with the rest of the Task Force in the audience or attending by Zoom.

Chair Darrah asked if there would be opportunity for him to introduce the Task Force members and thank them; Facilitator Viniard-Weideman stated there is a Power Point slide listing members in the presentation, it could happen at that point or it could be moved; Task Force Member Lee stated while this information is also listed in the body of the presentation report but Chair Darrah’s idea would show more appreciation “from the bench”. FBO Director Rodenbeck stated she will inform Mayor that Chair Darrah will speak first, then the presenters, and that the presentation would be set up with a laptop and clicker for slides. Task Force Member Sesterhenn asked if notes would be on the Power Point; Task Force Member Lee stated they could be printed; FBO Director Rodenbeck stated presentations are usually submitted without notes.

Facilitator Viniard-Weideman asked how much detail the Task Force wants to provide for the subcommittee recommendations. Vice Chair Dunn stated it could be more impactful with more detail and is an opportunity for Council to hear thoughts from the subcommittee members. Task Force Member Vajpeyi requested reading the recommendations in full as printed; he expressed concern that Council members might question the data or jab at the foundation of the Task Force’s work; Vice Chair Dunn stated that could happen, but we have data to back up the report; Task Force Member Vajpeyi agreed, and stated the speaker should redirect back on point.

Task Force Member Sesterhenn asked about the presentation timeframe. Facilitator Viniard-Weideman stated timeframe is something the Task Force needs to discuss/determine to provide to FBO Director Rodenbeck; the presentation itself shouldn’t last more than 20-30 minutes. Task Force Member Lee agreed with 20-30 minutes and expects 20 minutes of questions to be close to the approximate hour. He stated that presenting the recommendations as-is from the report, as the Task Force subcommittees chose the language to make a point, will let the document be the voice.

Facilitator Viniard-Weideman offered key points which should be presented on the front-end: these are the recommendations of the Task Force; our request of Council is to receive and file them to be a part of upcoming Goal Setting; questions should be clarifying questions about the recommendations; the data referenced and these recommendations are a very initial review meant to lead to the next step(s) in this conversation.

Task Force Member Johnson suggested that Task Force Members Lee and Sesterhenn meet to discuss how to split up presentation and practice as needed to stay within the presentation time-frame.

Chair Darrah stated most questions from Council will likely come at the Goal Setting meeting; the key to moving this work forward will be Council support at that time, and with the election, those being presented to now may not be the same as those making decisions at Goal Setting. Vice Chair Dunn stated the report should stand well on its own. Task Force Member Lee stated once the report is made public, Task Force members could reach out to candidates for Council or Mayor to make them aware of the work and report and to have a contact in the original Task Force. Task Force Member Vajpeyi asked if Task Force members are comfortable fielding questions and standing behind the report in that way; Task Force Member Heston suggested if there are people

comfortable answering questions, maybe contact information could be put in the report, with the caveat that once the report is public record, it could lead to additional e-mails; and stated she would be fine with people e-mailing her. Vice Chair Dunn stated questions can be directed to already publicly available emails and can be directed to the appropriate Task Force member as needed. Facilitator Viniard-Weideman stated City staff can also coordinate with Task Force members regarding this.

Facilitator Viniard-Weideman asked if City staff can coordinate back to the Task Force after Goal Setting; FBO Director Rodenbeck agreed they can; she stated public are welcome at Goal Setting meeting but there is no opportunity for public comment. FBO Director Rodenbeck stated to clarify that at the COW meeting on October 18th the plan is to have a presentation, questions by Council, and public input would not occur that night; there would be opportunity for public input on November 1st when the report is on the agenda to receive and file. FBO Director Rodenbeck stated she and Mayor typically review the agenda Monday morning and she'll advise him that Chair Darrah will provide an introduction, then Task Force Members Lee and Sesterhenn will present; she offered to provide Mayor with direction about how to direct questions as the Task Force has a preference; Task Force Member Sesterhenn stated she and Task Force Member Lee can either respond or direct toward the appropriate Task Force Member or subcommittee; Task Force Member Lee agrees.

Facilitator Viniard-Weideman stated the Task Force's requests of Council: to receive and file the Task Force's report and recommendations; for Council to present the report and recommendations at Goal Setting work session(s) and Council can connect with the Task Force during that process as needed, City staff can facilitate; and for Council/the City to reach out to the Task Force after Goal Setting. FBO Director Rodenbeck stated Council should have some idea regarding results in January when it is presented to Council and part of that will be getting that information to the Task Force; Facilitator Viniard-Weideman offered to work with FBO Director Rodenbeck through the process to bring information back to the Task Force by e-mail. Task Force Member Lee stated he hopes the understand is that Council or the City deliberately contacts the Task Force after Goal Setting to satisfy the request; Task Force Member Sesterhenn stated that the request wording is "meet"; Vice Chair Dunn stated something more official should occur with Council such as a work session. Facilitator Viniard-Weideman stated her understanding the e-mail with the initial outcome would come first and then the follow-up would be scheduled. FBO Director Rodenbeck stated the process can seem long and may go slowly; the presentation will be given in October, and the Goal Setting meeting will not occur until after the election.

6a. Task Force Wrap-Up

This is the Task Force's last scheduled meeting prior to Council presentation.

Facilitator Viniard-Weideman asked for a final check and for members to share thoughts or comments about the work and the Task Force. Task Force Members expressed thanks for their fellow members, facilitators for providing direction, and City staff liaisons for support; many expressed cautious optimism moving forward; they stated they are proud of the work they have completed so far, that it's worthwhile, valuable, and important but it's just the beginning of a much longer process; appreciation was expressed for having a diverse group of individuals on the Task Force and the engagement and commitment of members.

Task Force Member Lee requested that a formal thank you to City staff be added to the final report; Facilitator Viniard-Weideman requested consensus; consensus reached. Task Force Member Vajpeyi stated the Human Rights Commission will continue this work; Chair Darrah suggested a "transition team" of members from this Task Force to any new group that might come of this work.

7. Adjournment:

Chair Darrah accepted a motion to adjourn. Task Force Member Lee motioned; Task Force Member Dunn seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant