



Mayor & Council Meeting Date: September 21, 2020
Agenda Item Type: Work Session
Department: Housing and Community Development
Responsible Staff: Asmara Habte

Subject

Work Session on Social Justice, Racism and Bias in Rockville

Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Mayor and Council discuss the items in the attached table and provide instructions to staff on next steps.

Discussion

This work session item is part of a continuing Mayor and Council discussion on social justice, racism and bias. At the July 20 Mayor and Council meeting, the Mayor and Council directed staff to provide a summary of possible action ideas, aspirations, and directives made by members of the Mayor and Council, the Human Services Advisory Commission (HSAC), the Human Rights Commission (HRC), and community residents through Community Forum. The Mayor and Council also directed staff to present a suggested timeframe for implementing these potentially actionable ideas.

The attached table, therefore, contains a collective summary of the comments that were offered. The Mayor and Council provided its input during three Mayor and Council meetings, including June 22, July 6, and July 20. The HSAC and HRC provided comments to staff at a July 6 WebEx meeting. Further, these possible action ideas, aspirations, and directives have not yet been endorsed by the Mayor and Council as a body, nor by City staff, but are presented here to initiate public discussion.

The items in the table are organized into five Focus Areas.

Focus Area 1: Support community participation and engagement among all members of the city's population, including City employees.

Focus Area 2: Ensure the availability of diverse and affordable housing and provide for a variety of housing types and price points, and with access to amenities--retail, transportation, complete sidewalks, and parks.

Focus Area 3: Continue to build on the City’s best practices in policing, promoting racially-just policing by building relationships between community members and law enforcement, and ensuring all community members are treated with equity and respect.

Focus Area 4: Promote diversity in City staffing and Boards and Commissions membership.

Focus Area 5: Budgetary, Policy, and Planning considerations for the Mayor and Council.

The Mayor and Council could refine these categories.

We have provided preliminary staff comments for the various ideas to present additional information—such as the item’s status, potential legal considerations, and proposed next steps.

Staff has also suggested a proposed timeframe to implement potential actionable ideas as directed by the Mayor and Council. The proposed timeframes are:

Short Term = immediately to 6 months,
Medium Term = 6 months to 24 months, and
Long Term = 24 months to 72 months.

These timeframes may be refined as the Mayor and Council desire, following consideration of relative urgency, the budget, staffing capacity, legal parameters, and other factors.

Similarly, staff has identified participants, including various City departments and external organizations such as Montgomery County, Rockville Housing Enterprises, Montgomery County Public Schools, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, the faith-based community, city neighborhoods, and other potential partners.

The Mayor and Council’s discussions are at an early stage, and ideas and options can be adjusted upon further deliberation and direction by the Mayor and Council.

In summary, this list is a collection of important and possible actionable ideas, aspirations, and directives. It is presented to the Mayor and Council for further discussion, vetting, and prioritization for eventual implementation.

Mayor and Council History

The Mayor and Council have discussed this topic at three previous Mayor and Council meetings, including June 22, July 6, and July 20. This work session is a continuation of an on-going Mayor and Council discussion.

Next Steps

Staff will refine and revise the attached table based on the discussion and direction of the Mayor and Council, as well as explore implementation of the short-term items prioritized by the Mayor and Council.

Attachments

Possible Action Ideas_SocialJustice_Racism_Bias_091520 (PDF)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob DiSpirito", written over a horizontal line.

Rob DiSpirito, City Manager

9/16/2020