



**RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, March 15, 2023 (6:30 P.M.)**

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

NOTE: Checked boxes indicate present. Unchecked boxes indicate absence.

Community Members:

Shane Lloyd (Chair) Jared Hautmamaki (Vice Chair) Izola Shaw (Zola) (Second Vice Chair) Sonia Canzater Isaac Cudjoe Pat Grant Shuo Huang Tasnuva Khan Jordan Neal Gustavo Torres

County Staff Members:

Selena Mendy Singleton (Parliamentarian) Anthony R Alston Sylvia Hernandez
 Betty Lam Willie Parker Loan James Stowe

Khalid Afzal, a new member representing Montgomery County Planning Department

Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice Staff

Tiffany Ward Jeanette Rojas

CALL TO ORDER

- Shane Lloyd, the chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

AGENDA

- There were no changes to the agenda.

MINUTES

- Selena Singleton pointed out that there was a question asked by the primary notetaker to Shane Lloyd in the Feb 15, 2023, meeting minutes. It was clarified that the question was answered and so should be deleted from the minutes.
- Khalid Afzal, the new committee member, indicated he was not at the February meeting and therefore will attend the next meeting.
- Feb 15, 2023, meeting minutes were approved.

AGENDA ITEM 1

Council member Will Jawando visited RESJAC to talk about two bills he filed jointly with Council member Kristin Mink.

1. The Safety and Traffic Equity Policing (STEP) Act:

Council member Jawando explained that the Bill aims to lower incidents of interactions with police because of low-level traffic offenses and non-moving violations. He said the States of VA, WA, the City of Philadelphia, and San Francisco have passed similar laws. A public hearing of the bill is scheduled for June 13, 2023.

Jared Hautmamaki spoke about writing repeatedly to officials asking for more traffic enforcement in the Wheaton area. He said traffic enforcement is one-way police engage with the community. He said traffic is awful in the Wheaton area and will need more traffic enforcement. Jared Hautmamaki supports the data collection and more police training mentioned in the STEP Act.

Council member Jawando said the STEP Act does not stop police from stopping drivers for the offenses mentioned by Jared Hautmamaki such as speeding and running red lights. Will Jawando asked the community not to conflate issues.

2. The Home Act:

Council member Jawando explained that the Home Act aims to stabilize rent in the county. He explained that there is currently no protection of how much rent will go up after the pandemic's temporary moratorium expired. The Act proposed a cap of 3% annually. A public hearing is scheduled for March 28, 2023. He also mentioned there's a competing bill to the Home Act. He encouraged people to sign up to testify.

Izola Shaw said she supported the previous rent stabilization act that was enacted during the pandemic. Izola Shaw asked Will Jawando about how residents most impacted by rent increases are incorporated into the Home Act and whether the bill has support from landlords.

Council member Jawando said a community-based process was undertaken that resulted in the Home Act. He indicated there are 40 organizations that support the bill and added that a landlord testified in support of the bill at the press conference and that there's flexibility built into the Act.

Gustavo Torres thanked Council member Jawando and said CASA will support the Home Act.

Council member Jawando offered his contact info to participants.

AGENDA ITEM 2

African and Afro-Latines immigrants' narratives

The testimonies and speakers were organized by CASA. Below were the speakers and their topics:

- Dayra Silvia (Rent Stabilization)
- Valentin Claeu (Work Opportunities)
- Aime Techemeni (Healthcare)
- Beatriz Zapata (Non-Citizen Voting)
- Coach FOFO (Youth Development)

There were additional comments made by a gentleman with the first name of Maurice about the lengthy process of immigration, and asylum application, and asked CASA to do something about it.

Shuo Huang said he wished other council members were at the evening's meeting to hear the testimonies. Nonetheless, the testimonies were a good reminder that RESJAC to hear from residents.

Izola Shaw said she was grateful for the stories shared by the speakers. She said in the City of Rockville, the mayor and council submitted a referendum for noncitizen voting. The referendum will be voted on in November 2023.

AGENDA ITEM 3

- Rafael Lopez, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Services discussed his vision and priorities.
- Rafael Lopez spoke briefly about his family background. He then mentioned Governor Moore's legislative agenda including raising the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour, extending Child Tax Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, applying to Federal funds to reimburse electronic independence card fraud victims, working with local jurisdictions for summer EBT programs for those already receiving FARMS, invest more in temporary cash assistance, SNAP, and the use of EBT at Farmer's markets.
- Rafael Lopez said he wants to include the voices of clients, and community organizations, and engage young people in many of his efforts. He wants to work on ending childhood poverty by investing deeply in communities. He recognizes that language access is a challenge in the state. He's working with his team to launch the new website in multiple languages. He hopes to hear feedback from residents and users.
- Rafael Lopez also said that the State faces a shortage of people applying for jobs. There are currently 1000 vacancies across state government. He is committed to diversifying staff and will be proactive in reaching out to recruit people.
- Jared Hautmamaki asked if the state would be interested in a State version of the Indian Child Welfare Act. Rafael Lopez said he is interested and will work with the legislature in supporting any advocacy around it.

- Shuo Huang asked about the state disaggregating data to include Native Americans and to address vaccine inequity. Shuo Huang indicated that these issues were raised with the previous administration and did not receive a response.
- Rafael Lopez said he will work with his colleagues in the State on vaccine equity and will want to partner with the community to understand how best to disaggregate data.
- Nicole Samantha said she applied for a job from DHS but never heard back. She wants to get an email from the secretary to check about job applications.
- Raphael Lopez said he welcomed anyone to have his email. DHS has struggled with basic customer service. His job is to try to change that. He is enacting same day hiring. His team is attending a first job fair and will make available conditional offers on the spot at the fair.
- Another meeting participant stated immigrants faced difficulty applying for jobs because of a lack of English language proficiency and literacy in technology. Some of the employers going to CASA looking for workers are mostly hiring men, so immigrant women face particular challenges.
- Coach Fofa asked if the DHR has any grants that will support their sports program to serve more kids.
- Rafael Lopez said there are many grants from the State but most of them are for food banks. He will check to see if there are any grants that support youth sports and will follow up with the information. He mentioned he is establishing an Office of Community Partnership at DHR.
- Rafael Lopez also said the story of immigrant women and the barriers they face resonate with him and he will take their stories to heart. He mentioned the state is adding \$5 million to augment the programs that deal with immigrants, refugees, and asylees.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

- No report because the session ran out of time.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- No discussion because the session ran out of time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

- Heather Bruskin briefly introduced herself as the new Office of Food Systems Resilience manager. Heather.Bruskin@montgomerycountymd.gov

ADJOURN

- The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m. by chair Shane Lloyd.