



Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

5:30 pm

Zoom Meeting

Call to Order

Gopal Rajegowda, subcommittee co-chair, called the meeting to order at 5:36 pm. Kayla Elson, of Justice and Sustainability Associates, took attendance for the meeting record and reviewed the meeting agenda.

June Meeting Minutes

No comments were made about the June meeting minutes. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved as distributed.

Process & Health Survey Updates

Kayla Elson reviewed the timeline of the process of drafting and presenting policy recommendations to the Task Force, the Mayor, and the City Commission. It is expected that the Task Force will finalize their recommendations by September 2021. There were no further updates on the health survey

Discussion: Priority One Recommended Ideas

Kayla Elson presented the top three voted on ideas based on prior discussions – the first idea being to create mobile services for medical needs, the second being to prioritize equitable access to healthy, affordable food options, and the third being to increase access to mental health services.

With respect to **investing in mobile services to bring healthcare to underserved communities**, George Soria, subcommittee co-chair, stated that he prioritized this idea because mobile services can be easily and quickly implemented. He added that the mobile services could also share health education with those communities. Naomi Ruth Cobb, subcommittee member, emphasized the stigma in underserved communities around getting medical attention and being sick. She added that attempts in the past to bring medical vans to conduct services (e.g., breast cancer screenings) resulted in community members who did not use them because they spotlight the community member and their potential illness.



Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

Naomi Ruth Cobb suggested that the mobile units stay parked in one place for community members to access when they are comfortable. She also emphasized the importance of a large outreach campaign to raise awareness of these services. Mary Ligon, subcommittee member, suggested a partnership with churches to house the mobile units. Devin Pierce, subcommittee member, highlighted the importance of broadcasting a message that upholds the trust and respects the privacy of the community while also measuring the impact of the service. Devin Pierce also shared information about the fire department's desire to create an integrated mobile health program. He recommended that the City partner with the fire department, as trusted members of the community who are often called to address medical situations in place of 9-1-1, to provide mobile health resources.

For the second idea, **increasing access to affordable, healthy food**, Mary Ligon shared her support for investing in free food fridges around the city and working with local businesses to donate food to the fridges. Devin Pierce suggested hosting community events, such as community cookouts and dinners, with healthy food options and educational resources about how to maintain a healthy diet. Gopal Rajegowda emphasized the importance of increased education and suggested collaborating more closely with churches and community partners to share this information. Naomi Ruth Cobb shared information about the Trindy Gourmet's food truck that travels through the city providing healthy food options and education and suggested them as a community partner to collaborate with. Georgia Soria also emphasized working with local growers as well to provide the community with healthy food options.

Discussion: Priority Two Recommended Ideas

Under priority two, the subcommittee members discussed prioritizing two ideas: promoting and encouraging more equity in healthcare and the recruitment of more representative minorities in medicine and providing healthcare professionals with implicit bias training. George Soria advocated for a third idea: creating an online and physical central hub that contains resources and information about health care. He explained that the hub could connect to a network of partners and contain contact people that are up-to-date on the available resources in the city and can provide community members with referrals and step-by-step guidance on how to access certain resources. In general, the subcommittee members want to simplify the process of gaining access to health care services. George Soria also suggested working with the county's Palm Tran CONNECTION program which offers door-to-door transportation to those who are unable to transport themselves to address the transportation issue. Mary Ligon inquired about whether there are free health clinics in the area. Naomi Ruth Cobb answered that free health clinics in the area are covered and insured using state funding.



Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

With respect to **promoting equity in health care**, Devin Pierce suggested bringing the two ideas of implicit bias training and recruiting more representative minorities in medicine under one umbrella idea. Naomi Ruth Cobb emphasized that it is necessary to address the issue of trust in health care among certain communities, specifically the black community. She shared that health care navigators have always existed to help people access care, but implicit bias training has not and is very important. Naomi Ruth Cobb also underlined the importance of engaging with community gatekeepers to build relationships and connect with the community. For example, she stated that health fairs at churches are great ways to bring healthcare to wary communities in a safe space. Lastly, Naomi Ruth Cobb emphasized that the City of West Palm Beach needs to demonstrate its commitment to protecting and serving all of its residents. As a result, George Soria suggested hosting a barbeque with community leaders to discuss the work of the subcommittee.

Public Comment

There were no public comments made.

Next Steps

Kayla Elson and Milena Almetica, of Justice and Sustainability Associates, will edit the health subcommittee priority list based on the feedback from the meeting. Subcommittee members will then share their list of priorities and gather feedback from the community. The subcommittee also discussed hosting the next health subcommittee meeting in person in the form of a barbeque and inviting major stakeholders and community gatekeepers to discuss the priorities. Kayla Elson will work with Tiffany David, of the City of West Palm Beach, on organizing the in-person meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by George Soria at 7:06 PM. The next Health subcommittee meeting will be held on August 11th, 2021, from 5:30-7:00 PM on Zoom.

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Gopal Rajegowda, Subcommittee Co-Chair

George Soria, Subcommittee Co-Chair

Naomi Ruth Cobb, Subcommittee Member



WEST PALM BEACH
City Administration

Mayor's Task Force for Racial & Ethnic Equality

Devin Pierce, Subcommittee Member

Mary Ligon, Subcommittee Member

Kayla Elson, Justice & Sustainability Associates

Milena Almetica, Justice & Sustainability Associates

Absent:

Jennifer Jean Bell, Subcommittee Member

Jerry Deng, Subcommittee Member

Tiffany David, City of West Palm Beach Mayor's Office