

**MINUTES
CITY OF LAKE WORTH BEACH
SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING - SYSTEMIC RACISM TASK FORCE
BY TELECONFERENCE
TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2020 - 6:00 PM**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Triolo on the above date at 6:03 PM by teleconference from City Hall, 7 North Dixie Highway, Lake Worth Beach, Florida.

ROLL CALL: Present were Mayor Pam Triolo; Vice Mayor Andy Amoroso; and Commissioners Scott Maxwell, Omari Hardy and Herman Robinson. Also present were City Manager Michael Bornstein, Assistant City Attorney Pamala Ryan and Deputy City Clerk Melissa Ann Coyne.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Vice Mayor Andy Amoroso.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Creating a Task Force to make recommendations to the City Commission on the issue of eradicating systemic racism in the City of Lake Worth Beach

Action: Motion made by Commissioner Robinson and seconded by Commissioner Hardy to create a Task Force with five committees to make recommendations to the City Commission on the issue of eradicating systemic racism in the City of Lake Worth Beach, incorporating the input from the National League of Cities' Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) initiative.

Michael Bornstein, City Manager, introduced Leon T. Andrews, Jr., Director of REAL from the National League of Cities (NLC), who had a presentation for the Commission.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that he had suggested the Commission reach out to other organizations; he said that he was a strong proponent for LWB residents to participate in the conversations to express their needs and concerns. He said that the conversation was very important and no time constraints should be imposed because there were so many issues to address. He expressed enthusiasm to hear what Mr. Andrews had to say on the matter.

Mr. Andrews thanked the Commission for having him and allowing him to share how the NLC was framing the issue and supporting other cities. He played a video about Black Lives Matter and said that over 1,000 cities, towns and villages had had protests. He said that REAL had launched five years ago to prevent further conflict and to support local leaders. He said that there had been trainings and technical assistance to 400 cities around the Country. He explained the three components of effective national practices, normalizing, operationalizing and organizing and said that the NLC did assessments to survey staff, quantify data and how a city brought residents into the conversation. He stated that there was a series of racial equity trainings that was offered; it would be a sustained journey. He explained that the municipality would be developing a learning environment with a safe space, accountability, leaning into the uncomfortable, starting from where each person was and that what was said stayed in the space. He iterated the importance of using words properly; equality meant sameness whereas equity meant justice. He stated that the goals had to be set. He acknowledged the importance of race and equity; race was the strongest indicator of how well one would do in justice, education and the work force. He said that racial equity required closing the gaps so that race did not predict one's success, while also improving the outcomes for all and that there were levels of racism at the individual, institutional and structural level. He played a clip of "The

House We Live In”, which addressed the inequitable policies in the housing market. He introduced an example of the tools the NLC used as a process for racial equity and to engage local leaders. He encouraged the Commission to access NLC’s website for materials and named six steps to advance racial equity in LWB. He said that there were common themes across different agencies and that the NLC could share the models. He closed by saying that change would happen when people recognized why change was needed and shared a sense of urgency.

Comments/requests summary:

1. Commissioner Maxwell thanked Mr. Andrews and stated that the issue was bigger than the Commissioners; the community needed to start the conversation and lead the Commission.
2. Mayor Triolo thanked Mr. Andrews for the incredible presentation and expressed excitement about creating a plan.
3. Commissioner Hardy thanked Mr. Andrews for a presentation that clarified the issues. He said that when he brought forward zoning changes in the past, his rationale was dismissed and he expressed hope that the Commission would follow through with policy changes, even though the conversation would be uncomfortable. He stated that it was important to learn from what other cities had done and the NLC had created a great resource that could be very helpful to LWB. He said that some issues needed to be dealt with quickly, like police reform.
4. Commissioner Robinson thanked Mr. Andrews and City Manager Bornstein for bringing the presentation to the Commission. He asked Mr. Andrews for his assessment of the five proposed committees in the task force with each Commissioner overseeing one.

Mr. Andrews replied that LWB should ensure that an issue was under its purview before entertaining recommendations from a task force. He said that he did not have context, but advised that the City should have a healing space and be committed to structural changes; there should not be an expectation of being able to change something over which the City did not have control.

Commissioner Robinson expressed confidence that the task force could come up with solutions to issues in all five committees.

5. Vice Mayor Amoroso thanked Mr. Andrews for attending the Commission meeting and said that he had worked with him through the NLC and attended most of his group meetings. He stated the Mr. Andrews did great work and said that he looked forward to working with him and any other organizations to help the City get where it need to regarding the issues.
6. Mayor Triolo said that Commissioner Maxwell and Vice Mayor Amoroso were going in the same direction. She reported that she had spoken to officials at the County, which had some initiatives in place. She recommended that the travel budget be used to pay for training from the NLC or the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC); Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioner’s (PBCBCC) Mayor Kerner had expressed interest. She asked what the next steps should be.

Commissioner Hardy stated that some issues could be addressed more quickly than others because they had been studied extensively and an action plan could be brought back to the Commission.

Mayor Triolo said that Sheriff Bradshaw was not opposed to having body cameras for PBSO deputies, but it was a question of funding and he had to answer to the County Commission.

Commissioner Hardy said that he would favor funding body cameras from the penny sales tax and the Sheriff determined his own budget. He said that the Sheriff's budget was more than \$700 million and the City should go to the Sheriff.

Mayor Triolo stated that there was a lot involved with the body cameras at a cost of approximately \$20 million and that local municipalities should band together to lobby for body cameras from the County Commission. She opined that LWB had a tapestry of compassionate residents and the City could be innovative and do something special and meaningful to impact the community.

7. Commissioner Robinson said that time should be spent deciding how to set up the task force with five committees and prioritize spending. He spoke in favor of using the travel budget on training. He stated that the Sheriff could use his budget for body cameras.

Mayor Triolo asked for guidance from Mr. Andrews.

Mr. Andrews said that there was no one size fits all answer and agreed with having a balance of community members.

Commissioner Robinson stated that the task force would be a vehicle for discussions with the community.

Vice Mayor Amoroso opined that LWB should be working with the other municipalities. He said that there should be discussions with the community and asked how they would proceed.

Commissioner Hardy said that he sought to make a motion to divide the question as to the formation and composition of the task force, the production issue of what would be studied and produced and the time for such.

Action: Amended Motion made by Commissioner Hardy and seconded by Commissioner Robinson to divide the motion into three questions; the formation and composition of the task force, what would be studied and produced and the time for such, if some issues could be fast tracked.

City Attorney Ryan said that the problem with determining the composition of the task force would be to specify the responsibilities of each committee.

Mayor Triolo expressed concern about the constraints of City staff and if it would be worthwhile to bring in people from other organizations that had systems in place so the Commission would not be recreating the wheel.

Mr. Andrews responded that the NLC did have examples of task forces.

Commissioner Maxwell restated his position and read a petition signed by 70 residents who were disinterested in a top down task force approach; he said that he would vote against a task force as the affected parties only favored a bottom up approach.

Commissioner Robinson asked who had written the petition and who had signed it.

Commissioner Hardy said that there was a lack of trust between him and

Commissioner Robinson and Mayor Triolo, Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioner Maxwell and that the conversations were steered in a way to create animosity; he broke the rules to get attention.

Mayor Triolo stated that some Commissioners were bashed on social media by other Commissioners. She said that the rules ensured that everyone could speak in their own time, but the rules were not adhered to; for real change to be made, the Commissioners had to respect one another.

Commissioner Hardy stated that when he felt he was treated unfairly, he would take the argument outside the building. He said that there was animosity that affected the Commissioners' conversations.

Commissioner Robinson asked to move forward with the item.

Commissioner Maxwell apologized for not saying who had written the petition as he had written it and asked if it made a difference.

Commissioner Robinson stated that Commissioner Maxwell had a lot of influence in the community and residents might have signed the petition to appease him.

Commissioner Maxwell asked Commissioner Robinson to speak with the signers of the petition to see if he had forced anyone to sign it.

Mayor Triolo said that each Commissioner had the ability to express their opinions to the community.

The meeting recessed at 8:05 PM and reconvened at 8:24 PM.

Commissioner Maxwell read the names of those who had signed the petition.

Melissa Coyne, Deputy City Clerk, read the comment cards submitted by the following:

Maria Torres-Lopez wrote in opposition to creating a task force.

Edwin Contreras wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Ruby Bell wrote in opposition to creating a task force.

Cameron Stempel wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Noam Brown wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Kim Stokes wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Sue Welch wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Shanna Willis wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Noah Wilson wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Drew Martin wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Mathi Mugilan Paguth Arivalan wrote hesitantly for the creation of the task force.

Richard Guercio wrote in opposition to creating a task force.

Cara Jennings wrote in opposition to creating a task force.

Rachel Kijewski wrote in favor of creating a task force.

Commissioner Maxwell asked if he could make a subsidiary motion.

City Attorney Ryan responded that the incidental motion on dividing the question had to be addressed first.

Vote on amended motion: Voice vote showed: AYES: Commissioners Hardy and Robinson. NAYS: Mayor Triolo and Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioner Maxwell.

Vote on original motion: Voice vote showed: AYES: Commissioners Hardy and Robinson. NAYS: Mayor Triolo, Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioner Maxwell.

Action: Motion made by Commissioner Maxwell and seconded by Vice Mayor Amoroso to direct staff to bring back an agreement with NLC's REAL Program to provide consulting services for the Commission on how to work within the community to begin the conversation, facilitate it with respect to race equity and inequalities and to look into Barbara Cheives' organization (the Racial Equity Institute [REI]) as well as the CJC for training for the City Commission and the staff.

Mayor Triolo asked if Commissioner Maxwell would agree to work with the CJC and if Commissioner Maxwell's goal was to use their guidance to create an advisory board. She said that the Commission and staff should attend racial equity training.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that he would approve working with the CJC and added it to his motion. He said that he was looking for a facilitator for conversations with community members and then to bring in support staff to provide resources to the community to address the issues as they arose; the Commission would listen to the community.

Commissioner Robinson opined that the trust from the community had eroded and expressed disappointment that the Commission was kicking the issue down the road.

Commissioner Maxwell responded that he intended to help the community and had its support; the community desired to have the conversation to relay what they had and continued to experience. He said that he represented the most diverse community.

Commissioner Hardy stated that some Commissioners did not listen to the one Commissioner who had suffered from racial inequity. He said that he had asked City Manager Bornstein last year to send staff for diversity training and that he did not trust the other three Commissioners to actually do anything about the issue.

Mayor Triolo expressed frustration that she had tried to get the Commissioners to compromise and affect real progress on innumerable instances.

Vote: Voice vote showed: AYES: Mayor Triolo, Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioners Maxwell and Robinson. NAYS: Commissioner Hardy.

Action: Motion made by Commissioner Maxwell and seconded by Commissioner Hardy to bring back a resolution and item to present to the PBCBCC as a request in support of body cameras and

the funding thereof.

Vice Mayor Amoroso requested that all funding options were considered.

Action: Amended Motion made by Commissioner Hardy and seconded by Commissioner Robinson to send the same missive to the Sheriff that was sent to the PBCBCC, and that the Sheriff request officially any additional funds that may be required for body cameras for all PBSO deputies from the PBCBCC.

Vote on amended motion: Voice vote showed: AYES: Commissioners Hardy and Robinson. NAYS: Mayor Triolo, Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioner Maxwell.

Vote on main motion: Voice vote showed: AYES: Mayor Triolo, Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioners Maxwell Hardy and Robinson. NAYS: None.

Action: Motion made by Commissioner Hardy and seconded by Commissioner Robinson to send a letter to the Sheriff requesting that he ask the County Commission for additional funding for body cameras for all of the deputies in the County and commit to funding the cameras out of his own budget if he did not get additional funding from the County Commission.

Vote: Voice vote showed: AYES: Commissioners Hardy and Robinson. NAYS: Mayor Triolo and Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioner Maxwell.

ADJOURNMENT:

Action: Motion made by Commissioner Maxwell and seconded by Commissioner Hardy to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 PM.

Vote: Voice vote showed: AYES: Mayor Triolo, Vice Mayor Amoroso and Commissioners Maxwell Hardy and Robinson. NAYS: None.