



MEETING MINUTES  
CUYAHOGA COUNTY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY  
Monday, June 14, 2021  
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

**I. Call to Order**

Nailah K. Byrd called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

**II. Roll Call**

Quorum present.

In attendance – Eddie Taylor, Stephen Caviness, Randell McShepard, Rev. Kenneth Chalker, LeVine Ross, Danielle Sydnor, India Pierce Lee, Sheila Wright, Habeebah Rasheed Grimes, Jenice Contreras, Rabbi Joshua Caruso, Victor Ruiz, Yanela Sims, Glen Shumate

Excused absence – Heidi Gullett, Cordell Stokes, Marsha Mockabee

Clerk Byrd welcomed Member Shumate to the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity and shared his background. Member Shumate's appointment to serve the unexpired term ending 7/14/2022 was adopted at the June 8, 2021 County Council Meeting.

**III. Moment of Silence and Reflection**

During the moment of silence Clerk Byrd reflected upon the findings of a recent study conducted by Cleveland State University showing racial disparity in traffic stops in Cleveland Heights. The City began collecting data regarding race in 2019 and provided the information to CSU's Diversity Institute for analysis.

The findings showed Black drivers were three times more likely to get pulled over as compared to White motorists and Black motorists are disproportionately the subject of traffic stops in Cleveland Heights.

Following the release of the study members of the Cleveland Heights City Council and the Police Chief discussed next steps to address the disparities exposed. The City Council's Public Safety and



Health Committee are also planning meetings to next steps and the city's new 25-member Racial Justice Task Force is charged with further researching the disparities.

Data collected in major cities throughout the nation shows at least some disparity in traffic stops. For example, in Minneapolis Black drivers are 5 times more likely to be stopped by police and in Chicago and San Francisco Black drivers are 4 times more likely to be stopped.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

No public comment was submitted to [equity@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:equity@cuyahogacounty.us).

#### **V. Message from County Executive**

Executive Budish welcomed Member Shumate to the CACE. He also addressed the CACE and provided an update on County legislation recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday. He further shared information regarding Juneteenth celebrations scheduled for Saturday June 19, 2021 on Mall C. The County will have an information booth at the event. The County also developed two blogs with information regarding Juneteenth which are on the County website. The Executive thanked County Council for their support of the legislation recognizing the holiday.

#### **VI. Update/Message from Chair**

Chair Taylor requested Member Shumate provide comments regarding his appointment to the Council. He indicated he is pleased to serve and the CACE's work is important. He explained he received a debriefing from Clerk Byrd and is looking forward to the opportunity to assist with equity. He also provided information regarding his efforts around inclusion and improving the livelihood of Cuyahoga County citizens during his 30 years in the area.

Chair Taylor requested feedback from the CACE members on the reflection and thanked the County Executive for his leadership regarding the recognition of the Juneteenth holiday. He also thanked the County Executive for providing availability for the CACE members to meet with him and discuss the American Rescue Plan Act Funding.

Member Sydnor thanked the Executive for the Juneteenth legislation and encouraged the County to learn about celebrations at the neighborhood level and the difficulties faced by many residents in traveling downtown. She also encouraged the County to have discussions regarding reparations. Member Chalker touched upon the need to understand race theory and expressed disappointment regarding denial associated to the history of race.



Member Caviness requested the County Executive respond to a recent article regarding a decision to end a program providing housing for homeless individuals at a hotel in Independence. The County Executive provided context regarding the issue as well as background on the County’s efforts to reduce the homeless populations in shelters throughout the pandemic. He explained the County provided 43,000 nights of shelter at hotels throughout the County; however, the program was not intended to be a permanent solution. In April, the City of Independence decided they no longer wanted to house the individuals and the law supports their position. The County requested the City delay any legal actions while alternate arrangements were made to house the individuals. The County is working on more permanent solutions to housing but is not prepared to provide details at this time. Member Chalker shared his historical perspective regarding suburban resistance to homeless populations.

**VII. New Business**

**a. Approval of Minutes**

Prior to the meeting the minutes for the 5/10/2021 meeting were distributed for the CACE’s review and comment.

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Member Pierce Lee. The motion was seconded by Chair Taylor. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

**b. Analytics Reporting re CACE Online Outreach**

Clerk Byrd presented data requested during our last public meeting regarding the CACE’s online outreach efforts.

Webpage	Unique Pageviews (as of 5/9/21)
Fighting Structural Racism	4,583
CACE homepage and related subpages	1,515
Status Report to the Community	1,023

Data regarding the number of views for each of the CACE’s first eight public meetings which can be viewed on YouTube was also gathered.



YouTube	Total Views
4/12/2021	92
2/9/2021	77
12/17/2020	72
11/30/2020	22
11/2/2020	59
9/25/2020	51
8/31/2020	87
8/11/2020	193

The above data collected was also shared with the CACE’s members via email on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

**c. Recognition of Juneteenth as a County Holiday**

On May 25<sup>th</sup> Cuyahoga County Council adopted an ordinance proposed by the County Executive recognizing Juneteenth as a paid County holiday. In the same legislation, the County also authorized County employees to serve as precinct election day officials on Election Day without loss of the employee’s regular compensation. The County employees can receive the compensation paid to precinct election day officials in addition to their regular daily pay.

**d. Department of Equity and Inclusion**

The ordinance establishing a Department of Equity and Inclusion was discussed and debated during two Cuyahoga County Council committee meetings and the full Council Meeting. The ordinance was adopted during the May 25<sup>th</sup> County Council Meeting.

The existing office of Procurement and Diversity has been dissolved. There are now two departments, the Department of Equity and Inclusion and the Department of Purchasing.

The new Equity and Inclusion Department will focus on equity related issues in contracting as highlighted in the recent Disparity Study. The Department will also work with the Department of Human Resources to develop and implement programs and training to build a culture of equity with respect to race, gender and sexual orientation throughout County government.

The legislation also directs the Department of Equity and Inclusion to consult with the Citizens’ Advisory Council on Equity to evaluate the recommendations of the Disparity Study and provide advice to the Executive regarding the implementation of the Disparity Study’s recommendations. The department must also monitor the effectiveness of the implemented recommendations and



report to the Executive and Council at least once a year. Additionally, the department will serve as an ombudsman with regard to the County's equity initiatives and develop metrics and reports regarding MWBE contracting goals.

Member Caviness requested additional information regarding the department and Clerk Byrd explained the department's planning is in the beginning stages. The CACE members requested to meet with the department's leadership once appointed and confirmed to provide suggestions regarding the department's work.

**e. RFP for County-Wide Employee Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training**

Two members of the CACE and Clerk Byrd participated in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training RFP Selection Panel and reviewed three responses. A work group, of which Clerk Byrd is a member, has been assembled to work through the next steps of the selection process. The selection process is still in progress and there are no additional updates. Once the selection process is complete Clerk Byrd will provide further details.

**f. Cuyahoga County Equity Commission**

The last Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Meeting was held on the May 20, 2021.

During the meeting, each member provided an update on their agency's equity efforts. An update on the Racial Equity and Inclusion Training RFP process was also provided.

The members discussed meeting every other month but decided to continue to meet monthly based on the work associated to the RFP and the new Department of Equity and Inclusion.

**g. Clergy Event**

Clerk Byrd accompanied Executive Budish to an event with the United Pastors in Mission. The organization's mission includes working with political and civic leaders to contribute to a forward-looking community for sustainable growth as well as to restore trust in government.

During the visit County Executive Budish addressed the County's work in the equity space and Clerk Byrd provided a high-level overview of the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity's work to date.

The audience was receptive and appreciated of the County and the CACE's efforts.

**h. GARES Update**



Clerk Byrd and Laura Black participated in the GARE 365 Webinar and the Annual Conference.

The May 365 Webinar meeting included a presentation by GARE cofounder Julie Nelson regarding the GARE Framework. The framework serves as an opportunity to implement national effective practices by normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing conversations regarding race. Ms. Nelson discussed a three-phase roadmap for getting started with equity work. The first phase is context setting and assessment; the second phase is building skills, and the third phase is implementation through pilot projects, action plans, and organizing for accountability. Resources and templates for project planning were shared with the group and are available in the GARE portal.

The GARE Annual Conference was held May 19 – 21<sup>st</sup>. The three-day event included presenters and breakout sessions regarding equity related topics. Clerk Byrd and Laura Black attended.

Day 1's events included a panel discussion regarding the impact of government on racial equity work and included government leaders from across the country who discussed the significance of the current climate and President Biden's Executive Orders regarding equity. Breakout session topics included sustainable DEI efforts, capacity building, the role of arts in decarceration, and leveraging survey results to create change.

Day 2's events included breakout sessions and a keynote conversation. The breakout sessions included normalization and staffing training, using community storytelling to make decisions, restoring land to tribal nations through property policies, equity driven COVID responses, and using GIS technology to drive equity decisions. The keynote session was a discussion between Julie Nelson, Race Forward Senior Vice President, and Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and creator of the 1619 Project regarding the need to confront our history on race honestly to move towards a racial reckoning.

Day 3's events included a panel discussion and breakout sessions. The panel discussion featured Heather McGhee, author of the book "The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Prosper Together. Also included on the panel was Dennis Chin, Vice President of Narrative, Arts, and Culture at Race Forward, Carmelyn P. Malalis, Commissioner of the NYC Human Rights Commission and Dr. D'Artagnan Scorza, Executive Director of Racial Equity at Los Angeles County. The panel discussed the intersection of racial justice and democracy. The breakout session topics included: budget equity tools, social vulnerability data use in COVID responses, and community driven planning of racial equity work.

#### **i. CACE Health Equity Summit Presentation**



Chair Taylor provided an overview of the presentation regarding how counties are responding to health equity issues and the work of the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity. He and Member Gullett presented with representatives from Milwaukee County regarding the work done following declarations of racism as a public health crisis.

**j. Subcommittee Chair Reports**

**i. Criminal Justice Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair Pierce Lee provided an update on her subcommittee's work. The members are continuing to conduct interviews and examine data and reports. The subcommittee will meet in person on Tuesday June 15, 2021, to dissect information regarding juvenile justice to set priorities, and to determine intersectionality throughout the subcommittees work.

**ii. Health and Healthcare Subcommittee**

Chair Taylor provided an update on the subcommittee's work in Member Gullett's absence. The collaborative community health assessment/improvement planning workgroup has been meeting to plan the next Cuyahoga County cycle (2022-2025). The workgroup includes all 5 hospital systems and multiple community organizations. The work will inform CACE efforts and CACE members are invited to participate.

The subcommittee is continuing to collaborate with Cuyahoga County HHS on multiple overlapping areas and is mapping some of the most pressing issues.

Dr. Gullett is continuing mapping work with Dr. Hovmand and is included in a new group focusing on health/healthcare. CACE members are welcome to participate if desired.

The subcommittee will conduct interviews with key informants over coming months.

**iii. Equitable Quality of Life Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair McShepard provided an update on his subcommittee's work. Member McShepard provided an update on the work associated to housing issues. He had a meeting with Colleen Cotter, the Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland regarding the County developing potential legislation regarding the right to counsel in eviction proceedings and sealing procedures for eviction records. The subcommittee also met with representatives of Enterprise, a housing coalition, and discussed Pay to Stay and Source of Income legislation.



The Enterprise representatives requested assistance regarding Senate Bill 158 which is an eviction expungement bill and suggested the County or CACE representatives could offer proponent testimony. There was also discussion surrounding the expiration of the eviction moratorium and landlord incentive programs.

Laura Black will email Member McShepard follow up information received from Colleen Cotter.

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#### **iv. Economic Opportunity Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair Caviness welcomed Member Shumate and provided an update on his subcommittee's work. The subcommittee is planning to send a communication to minority business owners regarding the Executive Orders associated to the Disparity Study. Member Caviness thanked Member Contreras for hosting an event during which Director Lockett explained the findings of the Disparity Study and the Executive Orders. He and Member Grimes have been discussing ways to better represent youth in the space of economic opportunities. He encouraged the CACE to think about the work from a reparative approach. The subcommittee is working to schedule additional interviews.

##### **i. Communications Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair Grimes reiterated the need for additional subcommittee members. She provided an update on the youth toolkit developed by the CACE, additional information regarding the communication regarding the Disparity Study, ways to share the findings of the Community Conversations, and suggestions on how to share and grow the CACE's online presence and promote the CACE's public meetings. Information regarding the public meetings will be included in the County's social media announcements.

#### **k. Update on Semi Annual Report**

Chair Taylor requested more participation in the CACE's subcommittees and encouraged members to join other subcommittee's meetings. He also explained expectations regarding the upcoming condensed report which will be distributed end of August or early September. He encouraged members to take an active role in drafting if they have not assisted in the past.

Member Caruso revisited the GARES updated presented by Clerk Byrd. Clerk Byrd will continue to share information regarding events hosted by the League of Women Voters (REAL talks), the YWCA (Go Live for Equity) and the City Club. Clerk Byrd will share a podcast she recently listened to regarding procurement.



Member Shumate suggested developing a repository to share resources regarding equity.

Member McShepard suggested scheduling a discussion or a sharing of notes with members of the City of Cleveland's equity working group. Danielle Sydnor and Marsha Mockabee serve as members of both groups and could provide an update.

Member Sims encouraged the members to consider the impact of the CACE's work on individual residents who work for **an** employer but are **not** employers. She explained the need to examine the issues from a labor standpoint and examining the lives of working individuals.

Member Sydnor suggested a joint meeting between subcommittees from the City and County groups. She shared the City is discussing a method to implement an equity tool associated to the use of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. She encouraged the County to consider a similar budgeting process to incorporate equity into decision making.

Member Sims asked if there was a system to communicate with the City regarding their thoughts on how the funds should be used. Member Sydnor indicated City administration and the Council Members have been receiving suggestions via email. She can share a document created by Neighborhood Progress regarding recommendations Cleveland received.

#### **VIII. Next meeting**

The CACE has proposed tentative dates for meetings throughout 2021 and 2022 with meetings taking place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month.

The CACE is awaiting guidance on whether or not the provision allowing public bodies to meet electronically will be extended past July 1<sup>st</sup>. If so, the CACE will meet remotely in July. If not, the CACE will plan to meet in person and additional details regarding location and scheduling will be provided at a future date.

Chair Taylor indicated after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday the CACE will receive a schedule he, Clerk Byrd, Laura Black and the Subcommittee Chairs will put together regarding the expectations for the next report.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:16 PM.