

The City of Newark
Diversity and Inclusion Commission
Annual Report for 2023

Mission Statement

The commission is charged with recommending strategies to achieve Newark's vision to be an inclusive community that embraces diversity and enables and supports different lifestyles by encouraging cooperation, tolerance, and respect among and by all persons who come in contact with the City of Newark, including residents, students, visitors, employers and employees.

Commission Members

The Diversity and Inclusion Commission has 7 members when all positions are filled, serving staggered 2-year terms. Volunteers who served during 2023 are listed below. Chair and co-chair rotate yearly for a one-year term.

Appointment Type	D&I Commission Member	Start Date	Term Expiry Date
Mayor's Appointment	Sasha Aber	7/12/2021	7/15/2024
District 6	Patrick McCloskey	7/12/2021	7/15/2024
District 3	Tamesha Garnett (Acting Chair)	8/9/2021	7/15/2024
District 2	Joel Murphy	10/9/2023	7/15/2025
District 1	Charles Alexander	8/14/2023	7/15/2025
District 4	Charles Linwood Jackson	5/22/2023	7/15/2025
District 1	Marihelen Barrett (Chair)	9/13/2021	Resigned

A list of current members is maintained on the City's website at:

www.cityofnewarkde.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/620 (pdf format). Secretarial services are provided to the D&I Commission by a member of the City Secretary's office; Diana Reed and Tara Schiano served as Secretaries for the D&I Commission in 2023. In addition, Devan Hardin (Chief Human Resources Officer) regularly attends D&I meetings as liaison to the city administration.

D&I Commission 2023 Accomplishments

- Recommendations to City Council
 - **2023** - The D&I Commission recommends that City Council establishes Juneteenth as a city holiday which was implemented in 2023.
 - **January 2023** - Proposal for funding support towards Juneteenth celebration – JP Morgan Chase.

Other Notable Efforts

- **November 2023** - D&I Commission web page is live. <https://newarkde.gov/1274/Diversity-Inclusion-Commission>

- November 2023 - Commission approved action plan to serve as a guideline for the discussion of agenda topics, goals, and recommendations.

2023 Guest Speakers/Presentations

- **January 2023** – JP Morgan Grant with Chief Communications Officer, Jayme Gravell
 - MS. GRAVELL REQUESTED THE COMMISSION’S SUPPORT TO SUBMIT A FUNDING REQUEST FOR JP MORGAN CHASE (JPMC) TO SPONSOR A JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION IN THE CITY. SHE AND MR. MARKHAM MET WITH JPMC’S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS EMPLOYEES, PRIOR TO THE CITY’S RECOGNITION OF JUNETEENTH AS A HOLIDAY, WHO INDICATED THAT THE COMPANY HAD A \$1 BILLION GLOBAL BUDGET FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES. SHE AND MR. MARKHAM FELT THAT A JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION WOULD BE APPROPRIATE BECAUSE NOT MANY PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OCCASION. SHE EXPLAINED THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD DIRECT THE CITY TO CRAFT A RESPECTFUL AND APPROPRIATE HOLIDAY; SHE REQUESTED THAT JPMC DONATE \$20,000 TO SPONSOR AN EVENT.
- **October 2023** – Affordable Housing/Inclusionary Zoning with Senior Planner, Mike Fortner
 - MIKE FORTNER, SENIOR PLANNER, PRESENTED AN ORDINANCE IN THE EARLY PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT AS DISCUSSED BY BOTH THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL. THERE HAVE BEEN MULTIPLE PRESENTATIONS ON THIS TOPIC IN THE PAST. THE COUNCIL AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOTH CONSIDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO BE AN IMPORTANT YET COMPLICATED MATTER. MR. FORTNER EXPLAINED THERE WAS A HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMPLETED IN 2016. HE STATED IN 2022, A HOUSING WORKGROUP STUDY WAS CONDUCTED AFTER THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS. THE RESULTING DISCUSSION WAS TO INVESTIGATE INCLUSIONARY ZONING. MR. FORTNER CONTINUED TO EXPLAIN EXCLUSIONARY ZONING IS THE OPPOSITE OF INCLUSIONARY ZONING. IT IS A SET OF POLICIES THAT PREVENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGH LAND USE ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS. MR. FORTNER BELIEVED THE UNIVERSITY IS BECOMING MORE ENGAGED IN THE DISCUSSION OF THIS PROBLEM. MR. FORTNER NOTED THERE ARE ADDITIONAL RECORDINGS OF MEETINGS WHERE THESE PRESENTATIONS TOOK PLACE ALONG WITH LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IN HIS PRESENTATION.
- **November 2023** – Newark Bicycle Plan with Senior Planner, Mike Fortner
 - MIKE FORTNER, SENIOR PLANNER, ATTENDED TO SHARE THE 2024 NEWARK BICYCLE PLAN UPDATE. THE LAST UPDATE OCCURRED IN 2014. THE CITY IS WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE WILMINGTON AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING 2 COUNCIL (WILMAPCO) AND BIKENEWARK. HEATHER DUNNIGAN, WILMAPCO, AND BOB MCBRIDE, CHAIRPERSON OF BIKENEWARK, WERE IN ATTENDANCE THIS EVENING. MR. FORTNER HOPED THE OUTREACH WILL EXPAND TOWARDS GROUPS THAT HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY OVERLOOKED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS. HE STATED ADDRESSING EQUITY AND DIVERSITY IN A BICYCLE PLAN IS IMPORTANT IN NEWARK FOR HEALTH, SUSTAINABILITY, AND INCLUSION. THE CITY WISHES FOR ITS BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY TO NOT OVERLOOK ANY AREA OF THE COMMUNITY, SUCH AS THOSE POPULATED BY MINORITIES OR THOSE OF LOWER INCOME GROUPS. THIS PLAN IS MEANT TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS IN THE CITY.

D&I Commission Goals for 2024

Topics to address:

- **Flags**
 - Veteran flags displayed along Main Street and other areas lack diversity and does not represent inclusion amongst all residents who served or were killed in action. The commission will work with appropriate parties to determine root cause and viable recommendation(s).
- **Camps and Daycare**
 - Commission member Joel Murphy expressed concerns from his district council member regarding lack of diversity and inclusion within the city's parks and recreational programs for summer camps/daycare. The commission will research this matter to determine root cause and viable recommendation(s).

City of Newark Charge to Diversity and Inclusion Commission

FUNCTIONS: The Diversity and Inclusion Commission is to provide advice and recommendations to Council and City staff in regard to the following:

- Recommend strategies to achieve Newark's vision to be an inclusive community that embraces diversity and enables and supports different lifestyles by encouraging cooperation, tolerance and respect among and by all persons who come in contact with the City of Newark, including residents, students, visitors, employers and employees.
- Assist the city and the community to eliminate and prevent all forms of discrimination, hate or bias.
- Act as conduit for complaints in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. Any related complaints about city staff will be transmitted to the city manager for investigation and follow-up in accordance with city policy.
- Recommend methods to improve diversity recruitment and retention efforts at all levels of city government including council, boards/commissions, and staff. Revised: July 13, 2021

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- Provide education regarding the community's overall diversity.
- Recommend effective strategies for improved public engagement and methods to remove or reduce barriers to improve access to city services for our diverse population.
- Recommend areas for investment where needs are greatest, addressing root causes of inequities and lack of access to more smartly allocate our public resources.
- Recommend opportunities for community partnerships as a strategy to better understand and address equity impacts throughout our city.
- Facilitate the building of relationships with under-served and underrepresented communities and serve as trusted messengers to the community at large.
- Prepare an annual report to council on the previous year's activities of the commission and the forthcoming year's goals.
- Perform such other duties as the mayor and/or city council may direct. The Diversity and Inclusion Commission shall have the authority to form working groups or subcommittees on specific topics that can meet separately from the main commission and report back during regular meetings. These working groups and subcommittees may include additional people who are not appointed members of the Diversity and Inclusion Commission to add additional viewpoints or subject matter expertise.

Diversity and Inclusion Commission

Vision: The City of Newark is an inclusive community that embraces diversity and enables and supports different lifestyles by encouraging cooperation, tolerance, and respect among and by all persons who come in contact with the City of Newark, including residents, students, visitors, employers and employees.

Mission: Develop strategies that will remove discrimination and increase inclusiveness in the City of Newark and provide information regarding any potential discrimination.

Actions:

- Act as conduit for complaints regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Recommend methods to improve diversity recruitment and retention efforts at all levels of city government including council, boards/commissions, and staff.
- Recommend methods to remove or reduce barriers to improve access to city services for our diverse population.
- Recommend areas for investment where needs are greatest, addressing root causes of inequities and lack of access to more smartly allocate our public resources.
- Recommend strategies to achieve Newark's vision to be an inclusive community that embraces diversity and enables and supports different lifestyles by encouraging cooperation, tolerance and respect among and by all persons who come in contact with the City of Newark, including residents, students, visitors, employers and employees.
- Recommend effective strategies for improved public engagement
- Assist the city and the community to eliminate and prevent all forms of discrimination, hate or bias.
- Provide education regarding the community's overall diversity.
- Recommend opportunities for community partnerships as a strategy to better understand and address equity impacts throughout our city.
- Facilitate the building of relationships with under-served and underrepresented communities and serve as trusted messengers to the community at large.