

## **AAPI Workgroup Meeting Minutes 2-25-2021:**

### **Meeting occurred via WebEx Teleconferencing**

Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m.

**Work Group Members Present:** Anwar Hasan, Bob Zhang, Devang Shah, Jodie Wang, Matthew Lee, Soo Park, Mabrooka Chaudhry, Pravin Ponnuri, Ashley Hou, Richard Li, Pfc. Stella Dieu, Samiyah Hira, Sanjay Srivastava, Clarence Lam

**Staff Present:** County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball, Yolanda F. Sonnier, Angela Cabellon, Chey Martineau and Janssen Evelyn

**Public Attendees Present:** Ming Li

I – Remarks from the following individuals were made:

**Angela Cabellon**, Chief Innovation Officer & Deputy Chief Administrative Officer said that it has been a little while since we had the kick-off, but it was a wonderful event and it has been a great month for the Lunar New Year. Angela thanked the group for swift action after the burglaries of Asian owned businesses on Lunar New Year. She praised the efforts of AAPI saying our workgroup is “in action” already.

**County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball** expressed a thank you to Angela Cabellon as the first Chief Innovation Officer & Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and wanted the group to know that she has also been serving as the incident commander on Howard County’s COVID-19 response team. She has been working every day, in addition to her other duties, to keep everyone in Howard County safe and secure. Dr. Ball thanked Yolanda Sonnier and Janssen Evelyn as they have been working very hard to get the AAPI Workgroup off the ground. Dr. Ball thanked each member who have agreed to serve on this group. He said: “I have been very concerned about the increase of Anti-Asian sentiment around the globe and in the media” noting that while this group came together “we had many of our Asian-owned businesses burglarized on Lunar New Year and this caused a chilling effect on our community.” He continued: “It is important that everyone is seen in our community and that everyone feels safe.” The work that this Workgroup will perform will work to inform Dr. Ball about issues with the AAPI community and he is certain that our work will help ensure that we have the very best community “over all” and “for all.” He said: “Thank you for your time and your talents.” Dr. Ball also thanked Senator Lam for his support and leadership in Howard County as the first Asian American Senator from Howard County. Senator Lam He is also a doctor and has been responding, daily, to the COVID-19 pandemic; his willingness to advise and support our Workgroup is invaluable and we appreciate it.

**Dr. Lam** wished to thank Dr. Ball and his staff to bringing this Workgroup together. He noted that prior county Executive Ken Ullman began working with the Asian community and appreciated that Dr. Ball picked up the “ball” and created this Workgroup. Senator Lam noted that the Asian American community is a large community in Howard County and that they, (together with members of the Pacific Islander community) have specific and important issues. Senator Lam said it was his pleasure to be here and support our group.

**Yolanda F. Sonnier**, Administrator, Office of Human Rights and Equity said it was her honor to work with Dr. Ball, Angela and Janssen and wanted the group to know that the Office of Human Rights and Equity is looking forward to supporting the Workgroup because the work we will do is impactful and will be important and meaningful to the County. She introduced Chey Martineau as the person who will provide logistical support in setting up the meetings, circulating information, the agenda and writing and posting the minutes on OHRE's website.

II – Introductions – members of the Workgroup and 2 guests introduced themselves, their professional and community work and then told us something that they had “never, ever done.” We got to vote on several travel and food items members alleged that they had never eaten or done. It was very fun.

III – PURPOSE, PRIORITIES AND GOALS of the Workgroup were discussed as set out in the Executive Order (<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Portals/0/EO%202021-02.pdf?ver=2021-02-11-121700-070>) as follows:

1. Promote the values of diversity and civility
2. Work with county agencies, non-profits and other stakeholders to facilitate an environment of
  - a. inclusion
  - b. communication
  - c. understanding
  - d. respect
3. Create an inclusive community where every person is treated fairly and equally.

To do this the Workgroup will:

1. Meet quarterly as a large group
2. Organize events (in partnership with non-profits, community groups) such as focus groups, facilitated dialogues, summits and outreach events, that:
  - a. Provide a platform to share concerns
  - b. Promote understanding
  - c. Foster stronger relationships
3. Advise Dr. Ball about strategies and best practices that support the AAPI community in three priority areas:
  - a. Business and Economic Development
  - b. Health and Wellness
  - c. Government Access and Community Engagement
4. Work with Howard County Government employees to identify how to educate members of the AAPI community in the three priority areas
5. Submit a biannual report of the Workgroup to Dr. Ball that:
  - a. Identifies emerging issues affecting the AAPI community
  - b. Provides data/information on specific representation in Howard County Government
  - c. Recommends, whether or not, the workgroup should become permanent.
6. Meeting minutes will be made available on OHRE's website.
7. You are all voting members of the workgroup. You may solicit help from persons not in this group to provide input and assistance on the committees you serve.

IV. Next, the Workgroup discussed the FEBRUARY 12<sup>th</sup> statement, released on social media, condemning the burglaries of Asian-owned business on Lunar New Year. Angela wanted to congratulate this group for coming together on this issue even before we had this meeting. She wanted the group to know that if an issue is brought to our attention, we will circulate it between the members of the group for appropriate action. If something needs to be addressed before our next general meeting, members will be given the opportunity to comment before we issue any statements or take any action. She wanted the group to know that there will be continued contact with the police regarding the burglaries and we are thankful that Stella, from the HCPD, is part of our Workgroup.

V. Nominations for Chair (or Co-Chairs) and Vice Chair (or Co Vice-Chairs) were taken. The nominations received were:

Richard Li, Samiya Hira, Soo Park, Jodie Wang, Sanjay Srivastava and Pravin Ponnuri.

OHRE will contact each nominee to see if/what capacity they will agree to serve and will circulate this to the Workgroup before the next meeting. Senator Lam advised against having too many persons serving in the same role as it becomes cumbersome. The Workgroup will vote on these positions at the next meeting. The duties of the Chair and Vice Chairs are:

1. Bring business / action items to the Workgroup / Run the large group meetings / develop agendas
2. Prepare advisory statements and assist the Workgroup submit the Biannual Report to Dr. Ball (Angela, Yolanda and Chey can assist).
3. Relate / report community issues to the Workgroup
4. Work with members of the Workgroup to achieve consensus

VI. Discussion of Communities and select Committees – Workgroup and committee members can be on more than one committee – discuss, as a group, what the focus of each committee is likely to entail. Committees should meet 2-3 times before our April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting to identify specific issues, concerns, ideas and work that the committee will do in support of the mission of the Workgroup. Each Committee should select a committee chair. The Committee Chair must be a member of the Workgroup. OHRE will assist each committee in scheduling and setting up meetings.

- a. The Committees are: Business and Economic Development
- b. Health and Wellness
- c. Government Access and Community Engagement

The following persons, including two who are not voting members of the Work-group self-selected to the following Committees:

**Business and Economic Development**

Matthew Lee  
Anwer Hasan  
Devang Shah  
Soo Park  
Jodie Wang

Bob Zhang

**Health & Wellness**

Mabrooka Chaudhry

Ming Li

Pravin Ponnuri

**Government Access and Community Engagement**

Samiya Hira

Ashley Hou

Stella Dieu

Sanjay Srivastava

Ning (Richard) Li

Those members who will be contacted to select a Committee are:

Eugenia Henry

May-Fong

Young Smith

Zo Tum Hmung

Rejaul Karim

Michael Zhao

VII. Other Items

1. OHRE will be preparing a google docs/spreadsheet containing the names and contact information for each Committee. This will be circulated before the next meeting. Please use this to get in touch with each other in your Committees.
2. OHRE will submit a statement/code of conduct for comment and consideration before our next group meeting. This statement will be voted on at the next meeting.
3. Besides the support of the OHRE and Angela, the County has not provided a fiscal budget for the work of this group. Initiatives that require monetary support should be detailed and submitted to the County Exec's Office to see if sources of funding can be found.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 6pm. All the future meetings will last approximately 2 hours from 6-8pm.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30pm