

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager



CITY OF WORCESTER
Advisory Committee on the Status of Women

Heather Borelli
Priscilla Elsass
Deborah Hall
Ariel Lim, Vice Chairperson
Coretta McCarter, Chairperson
Casey Thomas
Tracey Whitney

Tuesday July 7, 2020, 5:45 PM

Virtual meeting Cisco WebEx

Public participation: 415-655-0001 (Access code: 160 278 2567)

Members Present: Heather Borelli, Priscilla Elsass, Ariel Lim, Coretta McCarter, Tracey Whitney

Member Absent: Deborah Hall, Casey Thomas

Staff: Jayna Turchek, Yaffa Fain (Cultural Office)

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The Chairperson thanked Committeewoman Elsass for her service and all wished her well on her move.

2. Review and approval of February 4, 2020 meeting minutes

Committeewoman Lim motioned to approve the minutes as written and Committeewoman Borelli seconded to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2020 minutes. All approved.

3. New Business

A. Discussion: How is Covid-19 affecting the family structure?

Committeewomen briefly shared on personal experiences and challenges.

Chairperson McCarter shared updated information from the City's website. Specifically, data from last week (7/2/2020). Under Announcements, The City of Worcester posted a COVID Update. It stated that as of July 2, 2020, there were 5,247 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in the city of Worcester. This represents an increase of 75 over the last week, July 25th. Surrounding towns are showing numbers in the hundreds while we are in *the thousands, but we are a much larger city. Their numbers are also decreasing.*

The Department of Health and Human Services under the leadership of Dr. Mattie Castiel, is gathering information to report out on data on COVID -19 in Worcester and the impact it has had on various groups in Worcester. Dr. Castiel acknowledged that families of color have been disproportionately impacted. Maritza Cruz from the YWCA, among other community members, are working with them to determine how underrepresented groups are impacted and the care they are receiving.

B. Discussion on Committee statement supporting black lives

There was unanimous agreement that the Committee would draft a statement to be reviewed at the August 4th meeting.

C. Introductory conversation regarding the virtual forum on "The Talk"

- What does "the talk" look like for different families?
- Resources to help families navigate topic

c/o Jayna Turchek, Director of Human Rights & Disabilities
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Chairperson McCarter shared that the wording of this agenda topic elicited interest and was interpreted differently by different people. She wished to take the opportunity to build on the interest and proposed a series of conversations on what “The Talk” means to different people and families. Topics could include: police and safety for black children (specifically black boys); domestic violence; and sexual education. She suggested that people want a platform for their voices to be heard.

Chairperson McCarter then led a conversation about the intention for the agenda item today to be a discussion on “The Talk” and what it means to black families, surviving police encounters and knowing your rights. Committee members shared that not everyone had this talk. It was agreed that it affects everyone and that every child/adult could impact how another is treated and the need to be aware and to avoid putting others at unnecessary risk. All agreed on the importance to talk across the age spectrum and to provide resources for how to have age appropriate conversations.

Next steps: Chairperson McCarter will get a list of resources and others are requested to share what they have. Committeewoman were also asked to consider a list of women who would be great to invite to help navigate/facilitate this conversations. Committeewoman Hall was suggested to lead the domestic violence conversation.

4. Old Business

A. Debrief virtual film screening and discussion of “Anita: Speaking Truth to Power” in collaboration with Pathway for Change at the Worcester Historical Museum Saturday May 13, 2020

The event was a success with great online turnout and conversation. Committeewoman Hall was recognized for her leadership in making this event possible. Vice chairperson Lim highly recommends hosting similar events like this in the future.

B. Update on Women’s Suffrage Worcester 2020 Committee work

Yaffa Fain from the City of Worcester Cultural Office shared the progress and plan for online events for a week this August. The week will kick off with a pre-taped program on Wednesday August 26 (Women’s Equality Day). She mentioned that this would be a perfect opportunity to showcase the Women of Consequence Awards and suggested doing it on Thursday August 27 (the 2nd day of the weeklong events). It could be pre-taped and aired as an evening program.

C. 2020 Women of Consequence Awards (previously scheduled for March 12)

Committeewomen all agreed that holding a pre-taped awards ceremony to coincide with the weeklong suffrage events would be a good fit.

Next steps: Yaffa and Jayna will follow up to coordinate.

D. Wonder Women posters

The posters were going to be unveiled at the March Women of Consequence Awards ceremony. Committeewoman discussed whether the posters could be integrated into the pre-taped awards ceremony or as a stand alone event on another day that week. Chairperson McCarter was interested in taping short pieces from honorees and family members to integrate into a pre-taped short program.

Next steps: Chairperson McCarter will follow up with family members as well as Committeewoman Hall

5. **Adjournment:** Chairperson McCarter shared quote in remembrance of International Women's Day. The quote by human rights activist named Ginetta Sagan-
"Silence in the face of injustice is complicity with the oppressor."

Meeting adjourned at 6:52pm.

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