



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
Carl Vinson
Institute of Government



Georgia
City-County
Management Association

Addressing Social Justice, Race and Equity

Not just another task force or commission

Some cities and counties have a long history of social justice, equity, inclusion, engagement, etc.

As in Athens-Clarke, these efforts are engrained into every aspect of the organization.

What does a community do if there is no history or tradition of social justice, equity, engagement, etc.?

(This does not mean the community is inherently bad, just they may be blind to the needs, and deaf to the pleas, of some in their community.)



	Founded	Square Miles	Population	Median Income	Council Members	All Funds Budget	General Fund Budget	Employees
Athens-Clarke	1805	122	130,000	\$36,637	10	\$267M	\$140M	1,729
Brookhaven	2012	12	56,000	\$87,252	4	\$63M	\$29M	170

Though vastly different communities, the goal is the same concerning social justice, race and equity.



George Floyd's death was a catalyst, but his death was definitely not the first death at the hands of police.

We are shaped by our experiences...when was the first time you were cognizant / shocked that police did, or may have done, something horribly wrong?

I am 56 years old and my first recognition that something was not right was the death of Denver Smith in Bloomington, IN in 1983 when I was a senior in high school.

Unfortunately, Denver Smith, Rodney King, Ferguson, etc. did not spark systemic examination of an entire organization and community....just some select police procedures and practices.

...Google Denver Smith policing killing and in 1972 there was another Denver Smith killed by the police.



What is different this time?

- Nationwide Civil Unrest
- Social Media Explosion
- National Political Discord
- COVID-19 Stress
- Concurrent Similar Events
- Media Focus / Endless Loop
- Personal and Organizational Soul Searching
- Other?



What was the catalyst for Brookhaven?

City of Atlanta



City of Brookhaven



Brookhaven Planning Commission Member Calls for a “Race Commission”



Naming and Framing the Issue

“Race Commission” struck a nerve to some in the community

What would the commission look like?

What would the commission do?

What does success look like?

Will there be community engagement?

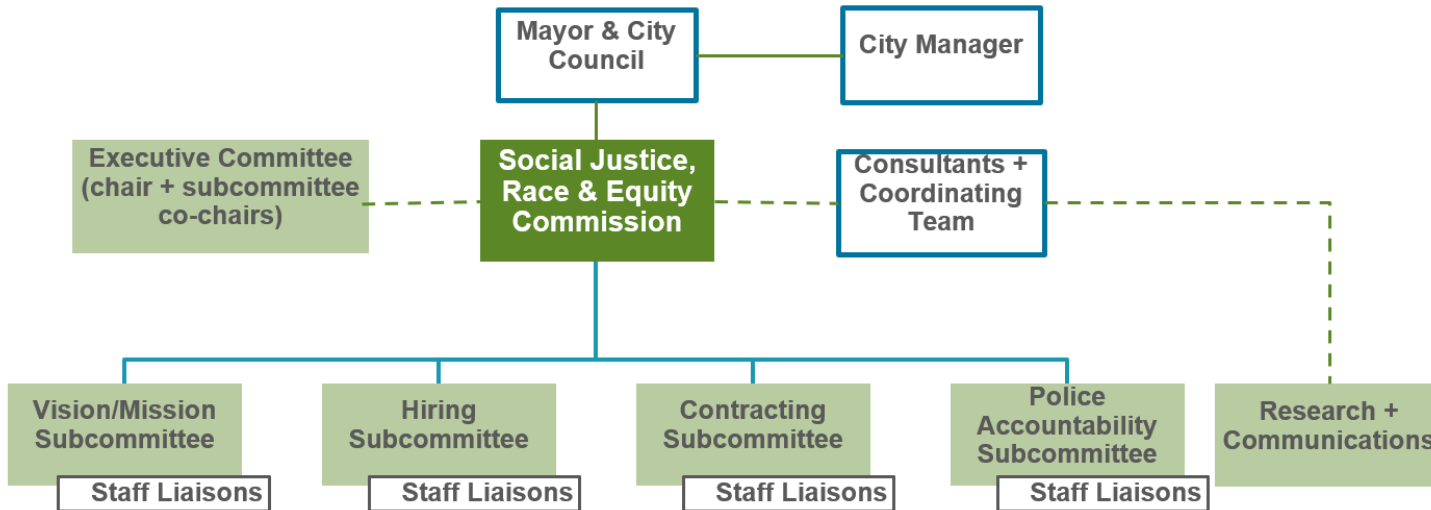
Who will staff the commission’s efforts?

Before announcing a commission / task force the very important work of naming and framing issue is necessary...*Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission*

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>



COMMISSION STRUCTURE



COMMISSION CHARGE

- Revision of Brookhaven Vision and Mission
- Recommendations for improvements to Brookhaven policies and protocols to guide:
 - Hiring and Retention
 - Procurement and Contracting
- Recommendations and best practices to guide Brookhaven Police Department policies, actions and accountability regarding use of force
- Proposals to ensure continued, robust citizen participation related to social justice, race and equity or anything Brookhaven related
- Examples of innovative policy statements across aligned, connected issues



A SAMPLING OF SJREC DISCUSSIONS

- **Align Brookhaven Police Department demographic data collection and reporting** on arrests, citations, and use of force with other sources of demographic data to allow for side-by-side comparisons
- **Survey vendors** who were not awarded contracts with the City of Brookhaven to better understand and address barriers to entry
- **Formalize exit interviews with outgoing City of Brookhaven personnel** to better understand their reasons for leaving and if there's room for improvement, in terms of creating a more equitable and inclusive work environment
- **Track the demographics of the City of Brookhaven job applicants** to better understand who we attract and how we might recruit differently to enable a diverse workforce



Brookhaven Cannot Do It Alone

- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Chrysalis Lab
- Kettering Foundation
- Georgia Municipal Association
- International City / County Management Association
- Community Stakeholders (businesses, HOA's, faith-based organizations, etc.)



Secret Sauce...Purposeful / Genuine / Sincere

“In a person who searches the soul’s depth only occasionally and returns to the surface and remains there, the depth so rarely experienced will lose its power to shape those levels which lie closest to the surface.” Edith Stein.



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Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission

- SJREC Sub-Committees
- SJREC Board Members
- SJREC Meetings
- Authorizing Measures
- Book Club
- Brookhaven Demographic Data
- City of Brookhaven Organizational Chart
- Code of Ordinances and City Charter
- Resources on Social Justice, Race and Equity
- SJREC News
- Glossary of Terms

