

SOCIAL JUSTICE, RACE AND EQUITY COMMISSION

Working toward a more equitable Brookhaven

City Council names Tywana Minor chair of Social Justice, Race & Equity Commission

The Mayor and City Council of Brookhaven approved the appointment of Tywana Minor as Chair of the Brookhaven Social Justice, Race & Equity Commission (SJREC). Minor has been a member of the SJREC since its inception in December 2020. John J. Funny, the outgoing SJREC Chair, and CEO of Grice Consulting, stepped down to run for public office.

"It remains our goal to make our community into one of the most welcoming and equitable cities in all of Georgia. John has us in good stead for the hand-off to Tywana Minor," said Mayor John Ernst.

With Minor's appointment, Commissioner Danita V. Knight remains as Vice-Chair of the SJREC and would fill the role of chair in the event Minor is unavailable.

Minor brings a wealth of leadership and experience from the corporate and nonprofit sector to her new role, most recently as the Senior Director, Global HR Business Partners with Habitat for Humanity International.

Minor is an active member of SHRM-Atlanta and serves on the diversity task force of the national chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). In 2020, she served a second term as President of SHRM-Atlanta. Minor is also a current board member of the Atlanta Center for Self-Sufficiency and BCM.

Minor was interviewed about the SJREC and her new role:

The SJREC is expected to issue its summary report and recommendation to the Brookhaven City Council in December. As this part of the process wraps up, what are the biggest surprises, good and bad, that you have encountered in getting to know a broader swath of your own city at a more diverse community level?

The SJREC was formed in 2020 as Brookhaven, like many municipalities across the country, began to focus more intently on racial equity after the murder of George Floyd. As appointed commissioners, we all went



TYWANA MINOR

into this with an open mind and a great desire to be a vessel to making meaningful contributions and recommendations to move us toward a more equitable and inclusive Brookhaven. Has it been easy every step of the way? No. The commissioners have pushed forward with courage and grace over the last 10 months and we are now poised to bring forth necessary and achievable recommendations. What has been wonderful is the partnerships and community interest and advocacy on the importance of what we are doing. We have had support of City leaders, Chrysalis Lab, and are backed by

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Commission charge

The SJREC was formed on Sept. 22 by a resolution passed unanimously by City Council. The Commission was charged with:

- I. Review of Brookhaven City Charter, Vision and Mission
- II. Recommendations for improvements to Brookhaven policies and protocols to guide:
 - a. Hiring and Retention
 - b. Procurement and Contracting
- III. Recommendations and best practices to guide Brookhaven Police Department policies, actions and accountability regarding continuum of force
- IV. Proposal to ensure continued, robust citizen participation related to social justice, race and equity
- V. Examples of innovative policy statements across aligned, connected issues

Next meeting

Nov. 18

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www.BrookhavenGA.gov/SJREC



Reaching a consensus with community input

The Social Justice, Race, and Equity Commission (SJREC) was created with the intention of developing a diverse, inclusive, and participative process that all Brookhaven residents could be a part of.

That is why, as a natural evolution of this initiative, the community, allies, and stakeholders were invited to take an active role in the process of analysis and search for answers for a more equitable and inclusive Brookhaven.

As part of the intrinsic work of the SJREC, and to better understand the issues of race and equity within the Brookhaven community, its commissioners hosted Civic Dinners on the topic of Racial Equity during the summer. These dinners took place in a variety of in-person and virtual settings with the objective of engaging the residents of Brookhaven in the process and connecting with their neighbors.

There were five Civic Dinners held at restaurants in different parts of the City to reach as many residents as possible. Of the 92 resident attendees to the Civic Dinners, 68 percent of respondents said their self-awareness around racial equity improved, and 79 percent said the City of Brookhaven should make racial equity a priority in policy making.

But the Civic Dinners were not the only way in which the SJREC integrated the community in the process. Community Pop-Ups were also an important step in that direction. Setting up informative and interactive tables at key community locations and events was a great way for Commissioners to connect with Brookhaven residents and to gain broad community input, perspective, and engagement on issues of equity and social justice in the City.

There were seven Community Pop-Ups hosted by eight Commissioners, in which 113 individuals completed a survey and 81 percent said the City of Brookhaven should make racial equity "high/top priority" or "significant priority."

Council District Discussions also helped the SJREC engage the community on issues of social and racial equity. Taking these meetings to each district in the City was decisive in making the consultation process more inclusive and diverse.

In addition to the Civic Dinners, District Discussions, Pop-Ups and surveys carried out by the different subcommittees of the SJREC, various commission presentations and discussions with partner organizations, local businesses, nonprofits, and communities of faith and civic groups also served to spread the word about the groundbreaking work the SJREC is doing.

It is evident that racial and social equity is a priority issue for Brookhaven residents. The Commissioners will now take the input they received to craft recommendations, which will then be submitted to the Mayor and City Council for consideration.



COMMUNITY POP-UPS

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our national partnership with the Kettering Foundation. We've also had many firsts that we have helped the City establish. These firsts will play a big part in our recommendations because it gets at what "the people" want, need, feel and experience. This has been a labor of love, and commissioners have sacrificed significant time and energy and I am grateful to them and their families for supporting them on this important journey.

Have the logistical challenges of this pandemic significantly hampered the SJREC's ability to gather data and serve the respective subcommittee missions?

Absolutely. Nonetheless, we had to push forward. We experienced technology issues and limitations for more intimate conversations over Zoom based on City protocols and reduced community footprint at pop-ups. We also had to manage capacity limits for the in-person civic dinners. So while there have been challenges, it also fostered creativity to establish alternative ways to gather feedback.

What advice might you share with other cities wanting to commit to greater equity as well as this level of introspection?

Be clear on the charge, understand data and data limitations/gaps, engage staff in foundational conversations on equity, and communicate intentions early if establishing a citizen-driven committee and ongoing visibility and engagement by elected officials.

The Civic Dinners appear to be a highlight of the program so far this year. Can we ever really underestimate the power of breaking bread and getting to know people better, one on one?

The Civic Dinners were one of the many highlights. Citizens coming together to work on a common goal can't be underestimated, either. Relationships, bonds, and friendships have been established in doing this work, which has helped us all to grow in many ways. The dinners were definitely impactful, and during a time where human interactions have been forced to be minimized due to COVID, were a breath of fresh air that our community seemed to need. The structured conversations on race and equity and the ability to get to "know your neighbor" and learn from one another were indeed one of many highlights over the last 10 months. I would like to thank the community for joining in on public meetings, stopping by a pop-up, sending in written feedback and perspectives and for engaging at the dinners, and most importantly, for remaining curious.



CIVIC DINNERS



MORE ABOUT THE SJREC

The Brookhaven Social Justice, Race & Equity Commission is an all-volunteer, citizen-led advisory body, compiling data and recommendations back to the Brookhaven City Council, on the current status of equity and social justice within the City of Brookhaven, and what changes/improvements or considerations might be made going forward to make the community more welcoming to everyone. The commission is very diverse, representing most every demographic, race, culture and ethnicity with a presence in Brookhaven. The more than three dozen members meet monthly as a group, in smaller committees and sub-committees, and most recently have been hosting Civic Dinners, seeking further input from members of the general public. A final report and summary of recommendations is expected back to the Brookhaven City Council in December of 2021.

City of Brookhaven, Georgia
4362 Peachtree Rd NE
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From #community participants:



"I LOVED LEARNING ABOUT ALL THE DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS OF THESE PEOPLE AND FINDING COMMONALITIES BETWEEN ALL OF US WHILE HAVING THESE REALLY IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS." - MAKAYLA

#COMMUNITY



"I'VE BEEN IN EDUCATION MY ENTIRE CAREER, ALSO WORKING IN SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES AND I'M REALLY EXCITED TO KNOW THAT SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS HAPPENING IN BROOKHAVEN." - LUDY

#COMMUNITY