

# SOCIAL JUSTICE, RACE AND EQUITY COMMISSION

Working toward a more equitable Brookhaven



## Message from Chairman John J. Funny

Last summer, the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery inspired protests demanding true equity and justice in our society. The Brookhaven City Council recognized this challenge and established the Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission (SJREC) last September to provide a way to proactively assess the current social fabric of our area, identify areas where social justice and equity can be improved upon and make recommendations to City leadership for meaningful institutional change. I am honored to serve as Chairman of this Commission, as we work as a team to create meaningful recommendations for our City Council by the end of the year.

As a long-time resident of Brookhaven, I can attest this Commission is reflective of our City and includes representatives from the faith, education and business communities, and Brookhaven character area geographic locations. The diversity of backgrounds, expertise, and thought have allowed us to have fruitful discussions thus far. However, to make thoughtful recommendations, we also need to be informed by the community. Soon, we will reach out through community surveys and forums to gather your input on these critical issues. I am excited to see your responses.

I extend the invitation to join us for our monthly commission meetings held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. They are streamed live on the City's Facebook page ([www.Facebook.com/BrookhavenGaGov](http://www.Facebook.com/BrookhavenGaGov)), and the Zoom link is available on the SJREC website ([www.BrookhavenGa.gov/SJREC](http://www.BrookhavenGa.gov/SJREC)), where you can also find the Commission's latest work.

*"When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something."* - The Late Congressman John R. Lewis

Sincerely,  
Chairman Funny

### INSIDE:

SJREC SETS FOUR SUB-COMMITTEES

## 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

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# Sub-Committees

The Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission (SJREC) is comprised of 37 members, who include representatives from the various faith, education, and business communities, and Brookhaven Character Area geographic locations. The SJREC has established four sub-committees to accomplish the commission's work effectively. Each sub-committee includes two co-chairs, a staff liaison, and includes several commission members. The sub-committees will take a deep dive into specific topic areas of the City of Brookhaven for review and provide recommendations for improvements. Details on sub-committee meetings are available on the SJREC website at [BrookhavenGA.gov/SJREC](http://BrookhavenGA.gov/SJREC).

## Vision and Mission

Co-Chairs: Commissioners Tiffany Russell and Aixa Pascual

Staff liaison: Christian Sigman, City Manager

Members: Commissioners Amy Corn, Melissa Owen, Vena Cain, Jose Hardy, Josh Hearshen, Matt Paetzhold, and David Alexander.

Objective: Review and provide recommendations for improvements for the City Vision and Mission statements.

## Hiring and Retention

Co-Chairs: Commissioners Tywana Minor and William Naglich

Staff liaison: Helena Kallas, Human Resources Generalist

Members: Commissioners Charlene Bowden, Catherine Murithi-Wohl, Ruben Cruz, German Barerra, Rudy Baserra, Thomas Woodward, and Kyle R. Williams

Objective: Review and provide recommendations for improvements to Brookhaven policies and policy on hiring and retention.

## Procurement and Contracting

Co-Chairs: Commissioners James Moses and Alex Thomas

Staff liaison: Steve Chapman, Assistant City Manager and Chief Financial Officer

Members: Commissioners Zaki Anwer, Anibal Torres, Chris Corces-Zimmerman, John J. Funny, Danita Knight, Marco Palma, and Beth Wendl

Objective: Review and provide recommendations for improvements to Brookhaven policies and policy on procurement and contracting.

## Policing and Continuum Use of Force

Co-Chairs: Commissioners Shahrukh Arif and Monique Hudson Wright

Staff liaison: Major Shameta Jones-Harrell, BPD Commander of Support Services Division

Members: Commissioners Conni Todd, Janis Niesse, Loren Collins, Davis Burnett, Kathy Wells, Jeremiah Hinson, and Kirk Nelson

Objective: Review and recommendations on best practices to guide the Brookhaven Police Department policies, actions and accountability regarding continuum use of force.



Sub-Committee co-chairs meet on March 9 via zoom for an orientation and set priorities.

## The SJREC moves to establish four sub-committees

*Sub-Committees take a deep dive into specific topic areas and set priorities*

Brookhaven is diverse in every sense of the term, with residents who are natives of the area and from far and wide. While the City maintains its residential charm with beautiful parks and trails, it is also a major business hub in the Atlanta metro area. Brookhaven offers the perks of a bustling city and the quiet of a small town. Those unique characteristics make it increasingly important that City policies and resources are inclusive of all residents, which is the very essence of the task at hand for the Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission (SJREC).

The Commission, which began meeting in December 2020, quickly saw the need for sub-committees that will focus on specific subject areas to produce thoughtful and practical recommendations to the Mayor and City Council by the end of the year. The four sub-committees will be lead by two co-chairs and have a staff liaison to provide support and data crucial to the development of recommendations.

“The heavy lifting will be done in the sub-committees,” said Chairman John Funny. “Their work and final recommendations will be based on data, thorough research, and public input. I am confident that the framework we have set up will allow the sub-committees to provide the best possible recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.”

The sub-committees co-chairs meet on March 9 to establish a framework and hear from the administrative team on the expected timeline to complete the Commission’s work. In November 2020, City Council approved a contract with Chrysalis Lab for facilitation services and to provide support to the Commission.

During the meeting, Chrysalis Lab presented the four phases of work and the 4P assessment tool (people, place, process and power) that the sub-committees will refer to as they do their work.

Phase I of grounding and data is in the process of wrapping up. The City has provided the Commission with an overview of current policies and practices and demographic data.

Phase II will assess data and identify inequities using the 4P assessment tool, which requires individuals to evaluate information through four categories: people, place, process, and power. The people category evaluates who is most affected by the issue; place evaluates where the issue occurs; process evaluates how the issue arose; power evaluates the decision-making process.

Phase III will focus on engaging residents and local businesses alike through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and community engagement. Input from the public is a crucial element for the final recommendations the sub-committees will create.

Phase IV will bring together all the research, data, and information from the previous phases to develop well-informed, forward-thinking recommendations for advancing social justice and equity within the City of Brookhaven.

“There is no doubt in my mind that each of the sub-committees will bring forward transformative recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for consideration,” said City Manager Christian Sigman. “When the work is done, Brookhaven will be a model city for social justice and equity.”

**City of Brookhaven, Georgia**  
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## Upcoming Meetings

### Upcoming meetings

April 15  
May 20  
June 17

The SJREC meets on the third Thursday of the month from 7p.m. to 9 p.m. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, meetings are held virtually via zoom and are streamed live on the City's Facebook page [www.Facebook.com/BrookhavenGaGov](http://www.Facebook.com/BrookhavenGaGov).

Public input is accepted via email at [PublicComment@BrookhavenGA.gov](mailto:PublicComment@BrookhavenGA.gov).

For each meeting's zoom link and more information visit: [www.BrookhavenGA.gov/SJREC](http://www.BrookhavenGA.gov/SJREC).

## Visit the SJREC website

Curious about who is part of the Commission? Do you want to dive deep into the work of the Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission? Visit the SJREC website where you can find in one organized place all things SJREC.

[www.BrookhavenGA.gov/SJREC](http://www.BrookhavenGA.gov/SJREC)



## SJREC Book Club

The Social Justice, Race and Equity Commission launched a book club. Currently, the club is reading *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. The club will meet in late April to discuss the book. For more information visit the SJREC website and click on the "Book Club" tab.

## Sign up for the Brookhaven Blast

The Brookhaven Blast is a weekly email newsletter of all things happening in the City. Free of charge, no paid ads, and of all things Brookhaven. To sign up visit the City's website: [www.BrookhavenGA.gov/Communications](http://www.BrookhavenGA.gov/Communications)