

Charlottesville Area Association of REALTORS®
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Committee
Wed., August 21, 2024, 10 – 11 a.m.
Hybrid Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance: Ben Reeves (Chair) (remote), Rives Bailey, Rachel Burns, Kelly Faillace, S. Lisa Herndon (Board Liaison), Julie Holbrook (remote), Colleen Marshall (remote), Erica May (remote), Petrina Tyree (remote), John (Rich) Walker (remote), Kat Whindleton (remote).

Unexcused: Janice O'Hara.

Staff: Ali DiGuardo.

Call to Order: Chair Reeves called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. The Antitrust Statement was acknowledged.

Approval of Minutes from July 2024 Meeting – The July 2024 minutes were approved as submitted.

Budget – Staff reviewed the budget and the various placeholders for income and expenses.

Events – CAAR is confirmed for a booth at the Cville Pride Festival on Sat., Sept. 7th from Noon – 7:30 p.m. at the Ting Pavilion. Various members signed up for the three shifts available. Staff will follow up with an email regarding which remaining shifts need to be filled and what size of REALTOR® Pride T-shirt is needed per volunteer.

The Inclusivity and Celebration: Fair Housing Symposium with Drag Show & Fireside Chat is scheduled for Fri., Nov. 15th from 5:30 – 8 p.m. at the Hillsdale Conference Center. Staff and Chair Reeves reviewed the draft National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) grant proposal, budget, and agenda in detail.

This event will spotlight housing discrimination, particularly affecting individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and/or Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ+). Attendees will gain insights into the Fair Housing Act, hear from a local LGBTQ+ activist, participate in educational segments on the LGBTQ+ community (i.e., pronouns, creating a safe environment, sign the Stop Hate in Real Estate Pledge just as CAAR did in 2023, NAR Fairhaven training, Alliance Ally Certification Course, etc.), and engage in a dialog with the performers who will share their own housing discrimination experiences. The event will create opportunities for REALTORS® to actively listen, deepen their understanding of the LGBTQ+ community, and build relationships that positively impact both our industry and the communities we serve.

Various members volunteered to help promote the event with broker calls and brokerage pop-by visits as well as assist with set-up, networking components, and breakdown the day of the event. Staff will follow up with an email regarding what size of REALTOR® Pride T-shirt is needed per volunteer. Board Liaison Herndon suggested a higher registration price for guests. Now that the event is structured, staff will work to open registration soon, obtain supporting sponsors, and create marketing materials.

A MOTION was **MADE, SECONDED**, and **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED** to apply for a NAR \$7,500 Fair Housing Grant to support the November DEI event.

Old Business – Staff and Chair Reeves reference the gender-neutral bathroom signage discussion articles added to the OneDrive folder. Staff encouraged members to add more resources (e.g., discussion members have had with local businesses and venues) to the folder.

Chair Reeves mentioned the membership-wide email that was sent in June regarding the involvement of NAR members who had posted hateful and discriminatory language targeting the LGBTQ+ community as it relates to Pride Month on NAR's social media channels.

Staff and Chair Reeves provided an overview of their conversation with Jordy Yager. Mr. Yager is interested in becoming an approved Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) instructor, creating DPOR approved curriculum around fair housing and its tie to urban renewal in the City of Charlottesville, and providing an update of the work done through the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. Board Liaison Herndon encouraged members to ensure other community partners had the ability to contribute to creating the curriculum content and voice of City of Charlottesville residents and community. To ensure a broad audience could hear the update session, it was suggested that Mr. Yager present during a future General Membership Meeting – either as a brief speaker (15 minutes) where then a full session (1 hour plus) would be hosted or a featured speaker (30 – 40 minutes). Staff will follow up with Mr. Yager to determine his time allotment for the update and schedule accordingly.

Staff shared two book recommendations that came from members who attended Matt Difanis' session. The DEI Library has a low participation rate. Various members had ideas to get the word out about the DEI Library. Additional research will be done regarding whether members can purchase books, etc.

Board Update – Board Liaison Herndon shared that the Board and staff have been concentrating on the NAR practice changes concerning commission/compensation. Members complimented staff of the due diligence taken when communicating to the membership about the changes and anyone who may be in violation prior to the implementation date. This approach was not taken by other REALTOR® association MLSs.

Rachel Burns and Petrina Tyree serve on the state DEI Committee. They commented that not as much action is happening at the state level as compared with CAAR's DEI Committee. CAAR continues to be acknowledged as a leader in the DEI arena and may be asked to present to brokers through a Virginia REALTORS® conference or session.

Staff Update – Staff shared a few updates regarding the current and potential staff members. In addition, staff encouraged members to register for the upcoming CAAR Reconnect Conference & Expo.

Future Meeting

Due to the number of members attending the Refresh: 2024 Virginia REALTORS® Annual Convention, members requested the next meeting be rescheduled in the month of September. Staff will work with Chair Reeves on a new date.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ali DiGuardo, Staff Liaison