

MAYOR CAROLYN BLACKMAN USHERS IN NEXT STEP OF COMPREHENSIVE RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVE APPOINTS BOARD OF ALDERMEN RACIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE

MAYOR CALLS UPON ALDERMAN EDWARD CORREA TO LEAD COMMITTEE AS CHAIR

Mayor Blackman and her team promised equity, openness, inclusion, and policies to promote economic opportunity for everyone during their campaigns for office. They began fulfilling that promise on January 1, 2020 and have continued to move forward with it throughout the first year of their terms. This article provides a recap of the accomplishments consistent with these values, along with the latest development, the appointment of the members of the Racial Equity Committee.

Blackman stated, "Our goal with this initiative is to establish the infrastructure to identify and rectify inequality across all domains by focusing on the most disadvantaged among us. As an activist during the Civil Rights Era, fulfilling my team's campaign promise to establish and begin implementation of the Racial Equity Initiative, gives me tremendous personal satisfaction, as we work to close gaps that will ultimately improve the quality of life for all members of our society. We simply must not tolerate inequitable access to medical care, healthy food, clean water, services, jobs, housing, and recreation, as they are costly and depressive to individuals and collectively to society."

On January 1, 2020 Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen introduced and on January 28, 2020 passed Ordinance 01-2020, entitled, *Ordinance of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Dover Creating the Wage Theft Prevention Act*, which provided broad wage protections for the most vulnerable workers, who are most often minorities, against unscrupulous employers. Ordinance 01-2020 is available here: <https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/564611170.pdf>

On January 1, 2020 Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen introduced and on January 28, passed Ordinance 02-2020, entitled, *Ordinance of the mayor and the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Dover Creating the Community Project Labor Agreements Act*, which provides employment and educational opportunities for Dover residents. Ordinance 02-2020 is available here: <https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/564611177.pdf>

On January 1, 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen appointed the most diverse team of contract professionals in the history of the Town of Dover. Mayor Blackman introduced this group in person to the public on January 4, 2020 at the special meeting held at the American Legion. The appointing resolutions are available here: <https://www.ecode360.com/documents/pub/DO1378/Resolutions/?day=1&month=January&year=2020>

On January 14th of 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen approved a capital project for \$2,075,000.00 dollars to improve the infrastructure of our water delivery system to ensure the Dover Water Commission is providing safe and healthy drinking water to our residents. Resolution 52-2020 is available here <https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/567796983.pdf>. The work, which includes upgrades to the Crane Hill and Princeton Avenue Pump Station Upgrades started following the approval of the project and is expected to be completed in 2021.

On February 25, 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen approved Ordinance 08-2020 entitled, *An Ordinance Amending Chapter 49 (Officers and Employees) of the Code of the Town of Dover to add a New Section Entitled "Constituent Affairs Coordinator"*, which established the position of Constituent Affairs Coordinator, specifically to attend to the needs of residents. The job description requires the Coordinator be bilingual to ensure that all members of our community have access to constituent services. In addition to

facilitating constituent issues, the Coordinator has helped to secure funding for a Business Directory Grant, assisted business owners with state grants and loans from the SBA and regularly coordinate with local church and civic organizations to provide food, groceries and other essential items such as baby diapers to residents in need throughout the community. Ordinance 08-2020 is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/564611201.pdf>

In February and March of 2020, the Blackman Administration partnered with Congressman Tom Malinowski to provide a free immigration clinic to the residents of Dover, so that individuals who could not afford an attorney had access to immigration services at no cost. COVID-19 interrupted these services, but there is a plan to reinstate them once restrictions are lifted.

In March of 2020, immediately reacting to the needs of the community at the inception of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town organized the Dover United Network with local churches and non-profits, including *We Are One Dover*, to provide hot, healthy meals and personal care products directly to sick, elderly, and homebound residents and to stock food pantries.

In March of 2020, the Blackman Administration began an ongoing bi-lingual and info-graphic educational campaign regarding COVID-19 and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and Orders of the Governor and Municipality to ensure that non-English speakers and those with limited literacy in any language could understand the life-saving measures being promoted.

In April of 2020 and ongoing, the Blackman Administration began hosting the “Table of Hope” mobile food pantry on Fridays and has provided tens of thousands of pounds of groceries and personal care products to thousands of those in need to ensure equitable access to fresh, healthy food.

On April 14th of 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen passed ordinance 11-2020, which established a mediation program to provide access to conflict resolution services for free or at a nominal cost with a fully bi-lingual mediator, so that individuals and families with linguistic and financial barrier would have access to them. The program is still in development, but will be available soon. Ordinance 11-2020 is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/564611213.pdf>

On June 9th of 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen approved Resolution 162-2020, which authorized the retention of an expert to conduct an audit of our police department, which has already resulted in significant changes to reporting allegations of police misconduct and other processes and procedures within the Department. Resolution 162 is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/567797155.pdf>

On June 9, 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen approved Resolution 164-2020, which authorized the Municipality to join the *Government Alliance on Race and Equity* (“G.A.R.E.”), “a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.” Resolution 164-2020 is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/567797126.pdf>

On June 23rd of 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen approved Resolution 169-2020, which authorized the retention of an expert in Fire Department administration, who was formerly in charge of minority recruitment for the NYFD, to develop a strategic plan for the Department, which includes an emphasis on minority recruitment and retention. Resolution 169-2020 is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/567797048.pdf>

On June 23rd of 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen approved Ordinance 15-2020, which authorized the construction of the Pennrose Veteran's Preferred Affordable Housing Project to ensure that veterans and their families would have equitable access to affordable, yet high quality housing. Ordinance 15-2020 is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/564611225.pdf>

On June 23rd, 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen passed Resolution 173-2020, which established a public-private relationship for 30-days to provide free, out of pocket cost, and reduced cost COVID-19 testing. The clinic provided free COVID-19 tests to residents to undocumented individuals and uninsured individuals. The resolution is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/567796989.pdf>

On August 25, 2020, Mayor Blackman and the Board of Aldermen approved Resolution 207-2020, which declared racial inequity a public health crisis in the Town of Dover and formally established the Racial Equity Committee. Resolution 207-2020 is available here:

<https://www.ecode360.com/documents/DO1378/public/567796046.pdf>

On November 28, 2020 the Blackman Administration organized the Dover COVID-19 Health Fair, which provided 366 free COVID-19 tests and 332 free COVID-19 Antibodies tests to residents of Dover and the surrounding area.

On December 1, 2020 Mayor Blackman announced her appointees to the Racial Equity Committee, which include:

- Alderwoman Sandra Wittner (D-1)
- Alderwoman Judy Rugg (D-2)
- Alderman Edward Correa, Chair (D-3)
- Alderman Marcos Tapia (D-4)

Correa outlined the initial areas for review, which is subject to additions based upon identification and need:

- Public health
- Public safety
- Access to medical care
- Access to healthy food, clean water, and adequate housing
- Access to education
- Access to recreation
- Economic development
- Government Practices
- Contracting and Procurement

Correa stated, "I would like to thank Mayor Blackman for the opportunity to lead this very important initiative. I look forward to working with my fellow Aldermembers and many residents of our Town to continue to develop and refine our comprehensive plan to ensure policies and programs advance opportunities and equitable outcomes for everyone in our community."