

# Press Release

## Office of Mayor William R. Wild

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### Westland Creates Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission

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**November 20, 2020** - Mayor William R. Wild is proud to announce that he has filled the positions on the newly created Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Commission. The DEI Commission was created as a result of the resolution passed by City Council in August 2020 Declaring Racism is a Public Health Crisis.

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Commission is governed by a seven 7 member board and two (2) alternate members that are appointed by the Mayor. Members serve a three (3) year term, except that of those first appointed, three shall serve for 3 years, three for 2 years, one for 1 year and the alternates will serve for 1 year. Members must reside in the City of Westland. Current City Officials or employees are not eligible for appointment. The Commission make up will be representative of the City's diverse population. The DEI Commission will meet quarterly as necessary. The DEI Commission promotes, supports and advocates for the vision and values around diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels. Identifies barriers to achieving greater diversity, equal opportunity, and inclusive environment and provides recommendations on how to overcome those barriers. The commission is to work to create an equity and justice oriented organization, with the commission identifying specific activities to increase diversity and to incorporate antiracism principles across membership, leadership, staffing and contracting.

"Many residents applied for the open positions on the DEI Commission and it was not an easy decision as there were so many qualified applicants," stated Mayor Wild. "A lot of consideration went into these appointments and I feel we have a nice composition of diversity, age, gender and skills that is reflective of the community."

The newly appointed members are as follows:

**Elnora Ford** is a longtime resident and has served on the City of Westland's Commission on Aging for nearly 20 years. Elnora is a member of the Southeast Homeowner's Association (SEHA), she serves on the board at her church and is the past state secretary for the NAACP.

**Lena Nichols** has lived in the City since 1957 and raised her 4 children here. Lena served

on the PTA when her children were in school as well as being on the Board of Directors for the Methodist Childrens Home Society. Lena retired from Ford Motor Company where she began her career as an hourly employee and worked her way up to a Product Process Analyst.

**Arthur Warren** has been a resident for 44 years. Arthur currently serves as President on the City of Westland's Community Development Citizens Advisory Council (CDCAC), President of the SEHA, President of the Westland Democratic Club and is an active member of the Norwayne Citizens Council.

**Angela Rimmel** has been a resident nearly her entire life. Angela has a master's degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Angela is a Foster Care and Adoption Director where a major aspect of her position is maintaining high levels of satisfaction for the company and employee through the company's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Fabiola Sanchez Santos** is a certified instructor for Zumba Gold. Fabiola has taught Zumba to the members of the Westland Friendship Center since July 2019. Fabiola was a Buyer Clerk for a company in Mexico for 8 years and a Bilingual Executive Administrative.

**Denise Sedman** is now retired after spending 37 years in advertising and public relations. Denise served as the Director of Public Relations for GM Fleet & Commercial Division, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Automation Alley and Marketing Coordinator for Oakland County Business Development and Planning Division supporting Economic Development. Denise also served on the Board of Directors for the Plymouth/Canton Community Literacy Council and Board Member of the YMCA of SE Michigan.

**Dr. Mohammad Elmenini, MD** is a Fellow of the American College of Geriatrics and a Diplomat of the American Board of Geriatric Specialists. He is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Cardiology and a Master of the American College of Ethical Physicians. Dr. Elmenini is a graduate of the American University of Beirut Faculty of Medicine.

**Ebonite Guyton (Alternate)** is a master's level public health practitioner with the State of Michigan where she has been working the last four years to provide equitable community health programs to low income Michigan residents. Ebonite is part of the MDHHS Chronic Disease Division MI-RACE team that was developed to lead the division to implement change strategies to address the root cause of racism and how it impacts the health and future of Michigan residents.

**Steven Thomas (Alternate)** has served many years in the customer service industry. Steven is a highly proficient accountant and he has a wide array of computer knowledge. Steven is an exceptional saxophonist that has put his skills on display and many City events.

The Commission members were in attendance at the November 16th City Council meeting to be introduced. In addition, all members will attend a brief training on the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act. A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Planning Session has been scheduled for Saturday, December 5 for the Commission,

Administration and City Council to have an open dialog on the subject and give the Commission a better understanding of the Commission's charge and the City's goals. The DEI Commission meetings and the Strategic Planning Session will be open to the public.

For more information, please call (734) 467-3200.

Westland, Michigan is the state's 10<sup>th</sup> largest municipality, with a population of over 84,000.

Westland has been recognized as one of 24/7 Wall Street's America's Best 50 Cities to Live, offering residents and visitors an ideal blend of single – family affordable homes, apartments and condominiums, great schools, and access to numerous outdoor activities. Public safety is delivered by full-service, professional law enforcement and firefighting personnel.

Westland is well known as a premier destination for shopping and dining in Wayne County with hundreds of shops and restaurants anchored by the Westland shopping Center, one of the country's original four regional malls.

The City is served by two public school districts; Wayne-Westland Community Schools serving 12,000 youth was recently named one of the best schools in Michigan by WXYZ-TV and is the proud recipient of 14 Golden Apple and two Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Awards. Livonia Public Schools, educating nearly 15,000 students, is proud of their MEAP/MME scores that exceed State averages and the district has also earned Golden Apple and Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School awards.

The City provides competitive incentives for those who are interested in investing in Westland, making it one of the hottest investment markets in the region. Westland's Fast-Track to Business Team, which consists of key decision makers who work diligently to “cut the red tape” and expedite the approval process for new business development.