

Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee

October 13, 2020

Members in attendance (remote via Microsoft Teams): Lauren Cochran, Carly Connor Reim, Jigarkumar Dave, Rachel Donovan, Tricia Dzuris, Jennifer Giannino, Phil Hicks, Cherrice Lattimore, Susan Mackinnon, Joseph Mason, Brian Petro-Roy, Latosha Wright.

Absent: Margaret Feeney

1) Call to Order

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Diversity, Racial Equity & Inclusion Committee was conducted via remote participation on Microsoft Teams. Meeting was called to order by Tricia Dzuris at 7:12 pm because the Chair and Vice- Chair had technical difficulties joining the meeting. Phil Hicks signed into the meeting moments later and led the meeting from there on.

2) Approval of September 29, 2020 and October 6, 2020 meeting minutes

Unanimous acceptance of motion to approve the minutes

3) Creation of Mission Statement

Tricia Dzuris requested that any documents to be shared at the upcoming meetings be emailed to her by Thursday at 1pm prior to a Tuesday meeting so that the documents can be posted with the meeting agenda.

Phil Hicks presented a draft Mission Statement compiled based on discussion at the previous meeting. Draft is as follows: "The Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Committee supports Chelmsford's efforts to become a welcoming community that celebrates diversity, pursues racial equity and embraces inclusion. We strive to identify and promote activities designed to further those efforts. We recognize the importance of valuing the various differences represented by our residents and will advocate for the human and civil rights of all of them. In addition, the Committee will provide guidance to local governing bodies on diversity-related issues. Through our efforts, we aspire to establish Chelmsford as a place where actively promoting diversity, equity and inclusion are accepted as core values for this community."

P. Hicks opened the floor to discuss revisions to the draft. Initial comments were positive. Initially the group suggested eliminating words, moving parts of the last sentence toward the beginning, changing verbs, using synonyms such as celebrate, promote, encourage.

P. Hicks emphasized creating a Mission Statement that is achievable. J. Mason said that getting all the ideas out there is important. Others agreed that the mission statement should encompass the big picture of what the group strives for, not necessarily what it can accomplish this year. J. Giannino wants to add strong language, citing words the Westford committee used, such as "discourage prejudice and discrimination against any person, group or other status protected by law." T. Dzuris added that it is our role to change the culture. We need to use strong words. L. Wright suggested "display unity."

J. Giannino believes using rhyme, “unity in our community,” helps people remember the statement. Consensus was that we should regularly use the complete name of the committee and not just an acronym. The full name emphasizes the role of the committee.



Final draft of the mission statement is as follows:

Mission Statement of the Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DREIC) supports Chelmsford’s efforts to become a welcoming town that recognizes diversity, pursues racial equity, and fosters inclusion.

We strive to identify and promote activities designed to further efforts of these core values, and to advocate for the human and civil rights of all.

The Committee will provide guidance to local governing bodies, municipal organizations, businesses, and residents on diversity-related issues, discourage prejudices and discrimination, and encourage unity in our community.

B. Petro-Roy made a motion to adopt the final draft as the Mission Statement of the Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee. T. Dzuris seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

P. Hicks asked for agenda items for the next meeting. C. Lattimore wants to share work of the CHS Class of 2010 work on diversity. L. Wright wants committee members to come prepared to draft key goals.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, October 20, 2020 from 7 pm to 8:30 pm. J. Mason will take minutes in the clerk’s absence.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.