

## Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee

October 27, 2020

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

Absent: Jigarkumar Dave, Margaret Feeney, Jennifer Giannino

### **Meeting Called to Order at 7pm.**

#### **Acceptance of minutes of 10-20-20 meeting**

Motion to accept – L. Wright

Seconded by –B. Petro-Roy

Unanimously Approved

#### **Continuation of Goals Discussion**

P. Hicks opened the meeting for discussion of the suggestions for goals made at the last meeting. He emphasized the need for the goals to need to be SMART goals. C. Reim added that they should be measurable. The group started to discuss the goals as reported in the minutes from the October 20 meeting, but it was not efficient. S. Mackinnon organized the goals into categories and emailed the list to each member (see attached). Group tried to vote on each statement as a Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 priority, but this was still an inefficient process. J. Mason offered to create a survey using a likert scale and send it to committee members via email. He will add a comment box for anyone to add something not included in the survey. Results will be reported at the next meeting.

L. Wright asked T. Dzuris about the process for choosing photos for the Annual Town Report. T. Dzuris replied that she tries to choose photos that demonstrate historically significant events in town. L. Wright sent an email with photos of display boards that might be good for the Diversity Models that she envisions. If we were to pursue this we would need to speak to the Historical Commission and the DPW.

P. Hicks summarized an email he received regarding a Chelmsford Telemedia program about Civil Rights. This is the documentary series by Jessie Heines of UMASS LOWELL that L. Cochran referenced last week. <https://jesseheines.com/CivilRights/Home.php> Prof. Heines is seeking to put together a discussion panel and asks for participation by members of the Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee. C. Lattimore suggests we view the content before planning. P. Hicks asked committee members to view the programs and be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting.

J. Mason wanted to acknowledge the recent news from Philadelphia about a man named Walter Wallace Jr. with mental health issues who was shot and killed by a police officer. He emphasized that it is Really Important to have a police force trained in dealing with people who have mental health issues. He would like to put a Fireside Chat with the Police Chief as a high priority item. P. Hicks would like to have goals established before that occurs. C. Reims believes we should use this latest shooting as an opportunity to start a dialogue. She recalled a recent incident where a black gentleman came to the Chelmsford Dog Park and confronted her about adopting a dog. He became agitated and started threatening other people that he would take one of their dogs. Carly called the police, who came and handled the situation very calmly.

C. Lattimore asks to build a vocabulary of terminology to explain terms such as Defund the Police and clear up misunderstandings, perhaps some articles as well. Needs to be non-combative and non-political. R. Donovan suggests we summarize articles with important points because not everyone is invested enough to read complete articles. C. Lattimore suggest we also design a logo. Perhaps we reach out to graphic arts students at the high school for help.

B. Petro-Roy is concerned about how to get to the hearts and minds of people who don't care or are disinterested. C. Reims believes it is important to reach out to adults who shape the minds of kids. She looks at the nastiness of Facebook groups and believes we can become a presence on these pages and convince people there is a better way. L. Wright said all of our effort WILL influence hearts and minds. Collectively we will make a difference and influence will spread. She cautioned committee member not to make political statements on-line because they are too divisive, and we do not want this committee associated with any political messages. P. Hicks believes we make a difference one on one. T. Dzuris said we will build a campaign to change the tone and make it more positive.

L. Wright would like to schedule a meeting with the Chief of Police so that it is on the calendar. P. Hicks would like us to have meaningful goals and an action plan before the chat occurs. S. Mackinnon suggests we have a dialogue before our plans are complete. L. Wright wants it to be a "two-way street." Meeting with the School Superintendent and Town Manager might make sense in the early stages as well.

### **Next meeting**

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by C. Reims

Seconded by B. Petro-Roy

**Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.**

ADDENDUM:

### **Working document for goals**

#### **Communication**

- Develop a survey on DREI in Chelmsford. Include LGBTQ, disabilities, different faiths, and get more inclusive w/ messaging instead of just focus on race.

--Start with students - have great feedback and easy way to get more info without putting them in spotlight (teachers too?)

-Determine where want to communicate (FB, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) how to promote?

-Telemedia from UMASS LOWELL - available resource to assist with media related needs

-Newsletter - email blast monthly covering the local business owned by BIPOC

-Searched town website - lack of diversity in pics - Do more to show diversity (age, race, lgbt+) - DISPLAY IN PUBLIC SETTING

-Chelmsford Magazine (Latosha will get official name) sent out on monthly basis - include Diversity column (spotlight others besides athletes) - share stories of BIPOC success on regular basis

-Create a Hotline for reporting racist incidents in anonymous format

-Town annual report- plan to use pics from George Floyd vigil and include more diversity in messaging

-Work with Lisa Marrone, Business Spotlight on town website

- Diversity Models - ppl in town submit their pics and in town center have pics of our diverse community in the center, or elsewhere
- Sponsor speaker/lecture series (maybe in tandem w Chelmsford Public Lib)

\*\*\*\*\*Town Website Updates - <http://ma-chelmsford.civicplus.com/854/Diversity-Racial-Equity-and-Inclusion-Co>

- -Anything that the committee would like to add to website can send to Tricia
- -Annual Town Report supposed to include historical events so pictures to include are from Floyd vigil and will send out pics for group input
- -Once we agree on certain training or recs, Tricia can facilitate influence within Town
- -Include diversity quotes and change content frequently

### Town groups "Influencers"

- Introduce DREIC to the community by reaching out to people that are "influencers" - School Board, public library, PD, FD, Doctors' offices, places of worship, etc. to share and spread the goals. Help them understand how we can be resources and to gather their input.
- Take advantage of Chelmsford Police Chief "open door policy" by coordinating Fire Side Chat, townhall style event or other community events.
- Look into what diversity training PD goes through, town employees, etc, and bring those speakers in -- Bring to school system too!
- Chelmsford Alumni for Antiracist Curriculum - met w. superintendent pre-summer, how to keep momentum? - over 500 members on FB group so can leverage for input and ideas
- Municipal fireside chat - more casual so guard down
- Budget request from town to encourage minority owned businesses to come to Chelmsford.
- Increased transparency into the bidding process for town contracts and what are the stats for awards to minority owned businesses?
- Affordable housing initiatives? Great way to increase diversity
- Promote town/municipal job postings to help increase diversity w/in town positions - increase visibility and representation in town employees

### Town Culture and norms

- Community events (post-covid) at Chelmsford Center for Arts
- Events highlighting diff backgrounds w/ tables (Ireland, India, African American, etc), diff cultural items of importance and to charge for event to raise funds for future use. Quarterly? During Black History Month?
- No town sponsored presence for celebrations of color/holidays (normally put up military recognition, switch it up and celebrate alternative events like Black History Month or Juneteenth, etc.
- Events in the area or not in area that align with our mission statement
- Engage businesses and community members for community events (e.g. food drive/bar crawl)
- Urge town to make declaration on topic of diversity - surrounding towns declared Racism as public health crisis (Lexington)
- Following declaration - bring in data from surveys to create an equity plan/strategy to implement goals with measured outcomes
- Change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's day (officially)
- Encourage town speakers to acknowledge native tribes and collective history at public events
- Town declare racism public health issue

## Schools

- More representation of Black/Afro Amer/Indian teachers in elementary schools
- Recommended books for schools - extra credit or even required reading
- Develop a survey on DREI in Chelmsford. Include LGBTQ, disabilities, different faiths, and get more inclusive w/ messaging instead of just focus on race.
  - Start with students - have great feedback and easy way to get more info without putting them in spotlight
- H.S. kids can be leveraged as a resource, making up subcommittee of students and alumni to be included if possible. -To start, leave H.S. admin out of equation due to fear and instead host pre-meeting to get unfiltered opinions
- Look into what diversity training PD goes through, town employees, etc, and bring those speakers in -- Bring to school system too!
- Lauren saw success after inviting students to "listening sessions" and thought that this would create more open dialog and would like to propose asking Schools to create "listening sessions"
- Chelmsford Alumni for Antiracist Curriculum - met w. superintendent pre-summer, how to keep momentum? - over 500 members on FB group so can leverage for input and ideas
- Student scholarship for Chelmsford Student who exemplifies ideals of DREIC
- Include BIPOC voices into school curriculum - directly address racism and effect on people today.
- Goal to meet w. Asst. Superintendent - provide guidance on literature and primary source curriculum materials, staff and professional dev
- Suggest programs that bring diverse experiences to students
- Promote town/municipal job postings to help increase diversity w/in town positions - increase visibility and representation in town employees

## Info for gen population

- Standing up For Racial Justice is a community group that is headquartered in Boston making it hard to attend events. Perhaps we collaborate as a branch or similar chapter in Chelmsford/Lowell to get more people in the community engaged.
- Student scholarship for Chelmsford Student who exemplifies ideals of DREIC
- Take Chelmsford Cultural Center event idea and Do it virtually!
- Natick has a "Freedom Team" where all municipal groups come together with Diversity Team to review incidents.
  - Update the "Public Celebrations Committee" which is currently vacant. Needs assistance with community events so this may be a good way to accomplish future events we are planning and revive the committee in a new and vibrant way. Members would be appointed by Select Board.
    - This is a chartered committee w/ small budget and room for future increases based on success.
- Set up network w. existing orgs/like-minded groups doing similar work - can publicize events we sponsor or co-sponsor
- Sponsor speaker/lecture series (maybe in tandem w Chelmsford Public Lib)
- Share terminology and resources to share knowledge and clear up misunderstanding about topics such as BLM and Defund the Police**