

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Town of Chelmsford, MA
January 5, 2022

Members in attendance :

Latosha Dixon, Chair, Carly Reim, Co-chair, Susan Mackinnon, Clerk,
Lauren Cochran, Rachel Donovan, Tricia Dzuris, Cherrice Lattimore, Brian Petro-Roy.

Absent: Joseph Mason

Also attending: Laura Judge and Maria Pelacio, Chelmsford Library

Call to Order 7:01 pm.

This meeting is being held virtually via Microsoft Teams. It is not recorded.

Approval of minutes of December 1, 2021, meeting

C. Reim made a motion to approve the 12-1-21 minutes. L. Cochran seconded. Motion carried.

Current Events

Library Maria Pelacio—Children’s programming will take a break for a while with the cold weather making it hard to hold outdoor events.

An American Quilt: Unfolding a Story of Family and Slavery with author Rachel May, Jan 11, 7-9

<https://chelmsfordlibrary.libcal.com/event/8518504>

The Last Negroes at Harvard: The Class of 1963 and the 18 Young Men Who Changed Harvard Forever, Feb. 10, 7-8

<https://chelmsfordlibrary.libcal.com/event/8646999>

Art on Tuesdays presents: Faith Ringgold: Quilts, Paintings, and Politics, Tuesday, Feb 22, 7-8:30

<https://chelmsfordlibrary.libcal.com/event/8468298>

Looking Things Over with Zora Neale Hurston (A Living History Presentation), Feb. 24, 7-8:30

<https://chelmsfordlibrary.libcal.com/event/8755580>

One Book Chelmsford, Ocean Vuong poetry book

C. Lattimore spoke with Raquel Majeski, Lawrence Academy Assistant Head of School for Equity and Community Life, and member of the Town of Groton’s Diversity Task Force. Of concern: Some towns still have “sunset” laws on the books, making it illegal for people of color to be out after sunset. Lattimore suggested inviting Majeski to a future meeting.

Committee Business

Logo Designs were submitted for approval. After discussion pages 1 and 3 were favored.

L. Dixon will ask the designer to make some changes to pages 1 and 3, considering use of words Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, perhaps adding rainbow colors.

Finance

T. Dzuris – no additional income or expenditures to report

Working Group Updates

Point Made Learning Film Screening No updates. There was discussion regarding the School Department’s reluctance to show the film in schools, with a suggestion to add a future agenda item to continue talking about DEIC’s role and goals regarding the schools.

Resident Engagement group

C. C. Reim, R. Donovan, B. Petro-Roy – Continue with Facebook, improve engagement with content. In the future the page may allow comments but improving content must come first. Tone, relevance, fact checking need to be decided upon. Some ideas are to present blogs or editorials, feature and promote minority-owned businesses with interviews or conduct interviews with students. Another suggestion is to re-cap what the DEIC is doing.

Black History Month – C. Lattimore, S. Mackinnon, B. Petro- Roy, and C. Reim are in this group.

Final plans made at last meeting on Dec. 14.

Daisha Kelly event, Making Cake, at the Chelmsford Center for the Arts has been postponed until 2023.

Chelmsford Telemedia wants to produce another show for BHM. Cherrice and Jillian Lattimore may produce a program with Pete Pedulla. Raquel Majeski, of Groton, has a daughter(Poetry) and son (rap) who may record for the program.

C. Reim- all content from 2021 BHM will be posted on the FB page, a different notable figure each day.

Watch It Wednesday --- February 9 “Thirteenth” moderated by Brian Petro-Roy.

February 23, “I’m Not Your Negro” moderated by Lexy Lattimore.

February 27 at CCA. Susan Gates communicated stringent covid protocols. ALL visitors must have no exposures to COVID, no cold symptoms, sign in for contact tracing, be vaccinated with booster, masked for all over age 2. Capacity = 100 or fewer seats.

“The Chelmsford Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Celebrates Black History Month”

Latosha Dixon will serve as MC, or worship leader.

Invited artists include:

Evan Martin, musician

Meghan Baptiste, prose and poetry,

Henry Macmillan, singing.

Joseph DeVoe, President of the NAACP Merrimack Valley Branch, will give invocation

Special guests: The Boston University Inner Strength Gospel Choir

Petro-Roy – Artwork will not be displayed at the library. Instead, we hope, artwork will be displayed around the periphery of the CCA during performances.

Mackinnon - Transportation for BU Choir NRT \$360

Other costs include food for choir. Working group is asking for \$500

Perhaps this can be funded via the grant from L. Dixon’s company.

T. Dzuris reports that our account does not have the money to fund all of this yet. We can revisit costs at next meeting.

S. Mackinnon made a motion to approve spending \$360 for NRT bus on February 27. T. Dzuris seconded.

Roll call, all attending approve (L. Cochran had left the meeting.) Motion carried to spend \$360.

Land Acknowledgment –

The Proclamation created by members of the Working group and Laura Judge and Maria Pelacio, of the Chelmsford Library was presented to the committee with the intent to elicit considerations for edits, and vote on the Land Acknowledgement statement.

Petro-Roy believes the land acknowledgement is completely incompatible with the town motto. We must petition the town to change the motto. “Let the children guard what the sires have won.”

Dzuris stated it needs support of the Select Board, and Town Meeting would have to vote to change the motto and the town seal. It could be a lengthy process.

Petro-Roy feels strongly that it is a package deal, cannot move forward on one without the other.

Reim, as an Indigenous Person, agrees, but wants to move forward presenting the LA proclamation and ask for a conversation to start about motto.

Donovan wants to move LA forward and start the conversation.

She asked, What does this statement mean, “respectfully recommends positive action”? Answer: SB does not want to be in a position to direct other groups. This phrase was suggested by the SB.

Petro-Roy wants to bring change of the motto right up front in discussion with SB.

Dzuris believes LA is first step in making change. It is something we can do now. The motto has been in existence for hundreds of years. We cannot even bring it to TM until October, and that will not move forward without SB recommendation.

Petro-Roy will not support presenting this LA without petition to change the town motto and seal.

Brian Petro-Roy Made a motion to vote on presentation of LA as written

Reim – yes

Mackinnon – uncertain

Lattimore – uncertain

Donovan – yes

Dzuris – no

Petro-Roy – no

Dixon – yes

Three yes, two no, two undetermined

Dzuris made a motion to discuss the Land Acknowledge proclamation at the next meeting, along with a proposal to the Select Board to put together a committee to change town seal and motto. Petro- Roy seconded.

Is there any further discussion on the motion?

Lattimore wants to acknowledge the work of this working group and wants to understand the issues before she votes.

Reim – yes

Mackinnon – yes

Lattimore – yes

Donovan – yes

Dzuris – yes

Petro-Roy – yes

Dixon – yes

Watch It Wednesdays – (see BHM info)

Meeting schedule

Future topics –

Land Acknowledgement and town motto and seal

Direction to go with schools

Look into groups who hold election debates and discuss our involvement

Next meeting will be Tuesday, January 18th at 6PM (virtual only).

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Susan Mackinnon, Clerk,
Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Committee