

Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Town of Chelmsford, MA
February 2, 2021

Members in attendance (remote via Microsoft Teams):

Phil Hicks, Chair

Latosha Dixon, Co-Chair

Susan Mackinnon, Clerk

Lauren Cochran, Carly Connor Reim, Rachel Donovan, Tricia Dzuris, Cherrice Lattimore, Brian Petro-Roy

Absent: J. Dave, J. Giannino, M. Feeney, J. Mason

Call to Order 7:02 pm.

This meeting is being recorded.

Approval of minutes of January 19, 2021 meeting

Motion to approve by T. Dzuris. L. Dixon seconded. Motion approved.

Black History Month Kick-Off

C. Lattimore was excited to see the new information on the webpage. She likes the rollout on a daily basis. Aleah Floyd came to CTM and sang *Lift Every Voice*, with a slideshow accompanying it.

Marine-biologist Dr. Jolvan Morris, an African American, female, marine biologist will be interviewed by Pete Pedulla about how she came to be in the field.

On Friday Sheila Upchurch will come in to read *Still I Rise*. The series is called Chelmsford Celebrates Black History.

The Superintendent of Schools sent a memo to the community and it included a reference to the DREIC website.

Training Opportunities

P. Hicks has now amassed information about several possibilities he will be sharing soon.

B. Petro-Roy found a free video game by the University of Wisconsin System Administration and National Institutes of Health called FairPlayGame.org The video game puts you into the persona of Jamal and brings you through his experiences and some biases he encounters.

R. Donovan went through training at her place of employment presented by Point Made Learning. It has an e-learning module, a film "I'm Not Racist, Am I?", and a game "American Dream." There would be a cost for this training.

L. Dixon proposed forming a working group to identify at least four training opportunities for multiple groups, POC, LGBTQ+, disabilities. Also, look for trainings aimed at different age groups.

C. Connor Reim, R. Donovan, P. Hicks, and S. Mackinnon will join the working group.

Proclamation Revisions

Three of the four Select Board members sent an email to P. Hicks. The fourth spoke to him on the phone. Select Board members did not believe they have the authority to enforce adherence to anti-

racist behavior in any town groups, in particular places of worship. One member suggested quite a few changes.

Dzuris re-wrote the proclamation using input from the Select Board members, but keeping much of what the Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee felt was important. C. Connor Reim stated she feels that now there is nothing in it that obligates SB to do anything not in their purview.

Petro-Roy stated the need for an overarching goal. He wants the SB to be a polestar for the rest of the community. Acknowledge the problem and take a stand against it as leaders of the community. Dzuris believes taking a stand and __condemning__ racism, discrimination and hatred is important. We are trying to be “Anti-racist.”

Petro-Roy says we need to heed the words Arun Venugopal shared on Juneteenth and turn around on the moving sidewalk, stride against the tide toward white supremacy.

Dzuris took some of the suggestions from SB members and combined some points but felt other words in the original document were important, such as condemn, unjust, learn from and educate others. Who is the “we?” was a question asked by the Select Board. DREIC believes it is the Select Board in this case.

Lattimore said, “There are people who can easily navigate this earth because of their heritage, background and experiences,... color of their skin, and others who cannot.” (There is no assignment of blame.)”

Hicks is still concerned that some members will not be able to accept the language, “acknowledge privileges ‘we’ enjoy while others do not..”

R. Donovan believes acknowledging your own privilege is an extremely important piece of this. Cochran and Mackinnon wholeheartedly agreed. Petro-Roy Brian said if you do not accept your privilege you cannot be an ally.

In the Therefore section Hicks suggests taking the word “we” out and change it to some: “Better understand and acknowledge those privileges some enjoy while others do not.”

Consensus was to make this change in the effort to help bring people to understanding.

Any reference to enforce accountability was removed and instead asks the SB to help our community. We added a suggested phrase to celebrate diversity.

A Motion to approve newly revised proclamation was made by C. Connor Reim, seconded by B. Petro-Roy. All approved, none opposed.

Dzuris will prepare final copy to send to the SB for review at their Feb. 8 meeting.

Hicks will send it to K. Lefebvre and plans to attend the SB meeting via Zoom.

Next meeting

February 9, 2021 at 7 p.m. The meeting will include a presentation by Lisa Marrone, Director of Business Development for the Town of Chelmsford.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by S. Mackinnon, Seconded by C. Connor Reim. Meeting Adjourned 8:27 pm.