

Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Town of Chelmsford, MA
February 9, 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, Joseph Mason, Brian Petro-Roy

Absent: J. Dave, M. Feeney

Guest: Lisa Marrone

Also present: Ken Lefebvre

Call to Order 7:02 pm.

This meeting is being recorded.

Approval of minutes of February 2, 2021 meeting

Motion to approve by T. Dzuris. R. Donovan seconded. Motion approved.

Presentation by Lisa Marrone, Director of Business Development for the Town of Chelmsford

Lisa Marrone is now three years into the job. Her initial focus was on Rte. 129 redevelopment. This included Website, branding, logo, Chelmsford Crossroads at 129. Empty space cut in half! Thermo-Fisher purchased one of the buildings. Triton Systems is expanding into another building. Pressed Café has taken a long-term lease, tentatively opening Dec. 2021. Businesses are interested in moving out of the Boston area. Direct access to the highway is a plus.

Now working on small business assistance to stabilize them throughout the challenges of the last 12 months. Two local grants were offered by the town – helped almost 40 small businesses, along with state grants and other corporate grants have helped.

A lot of outreach and communication.

New businesses in town – Chelmsford Nutrition, Old Mill House Coffee, Summer Street Grocers, Bike Shop on Alpine Lane, Tropical Smoothies in Drum Hill.

There has been a lot of interest for “ghost kitchens.”

Enterprise Bank is involved in bolstering the economy in town. Some ideas include shopping map, restaurant guide, historic walking tour map.

Lowell Five – Shop Local Chelmsford initiative

Community Teamwork – entrepreneurship in Lowell – grant application. Trying to create a local, online platform for local businesses, something like Etsy perhaps.

The Q talk show introducing small local businesses. Produced by CTM.

Bring back the Ribbon cutting ceremony.

Age-friendly Chelmsford- secretary and works on jobs domain.

Park project near Worthen Street.-Park bench, perennial garden, families or businesses could buy a dedication plaque.

C. Connor Reim asked about Rte. 129. Are there any incentives for minority owned businesses?

Marrone has not used any programs that are specific to minority owned. She invited Connor Reim to join the team to give perspective. She hopes she has built trust and relationships. She has had conversations with the owner of the peninsula in the center (former gas station.) No movement on that yet.

C. Lattimore is pleased to hear about age-friendly initiatives. She asked about the vacancy at Ginger Ale Plaza. Marrone does not know about any interest in that space.

She has had a lot of contact with minority owned businesses in town, at least 15 or 20. Customers were calling to help. Language issues made it tough for many of them to fill out applications. Lori Trahan's office has been of help. Lattimore expressed an interest in something for youth. A place for them to gather and hang out.

B. Petro-Roy – Full disclosure: Jack Clancy, President of Enterprise Bank is his father-in-law. Petro-Roy read an article about *Case Studies in Retro-fitting Suburbia*. He asked whether a mixed-use master plan had ever been considered for Chelmsford. Marrone has not explored that concept here.

L. Dixon asked about outreach to local colleges and universities: satellite campus in Chelmsford??? Marrone says Yes! Idea of a complex for three of the buildings has been explored with UMASS Lowell. Technical, R&D Center? Not currently in the works though. Association of businesses on 129 is being formed. (The town does not own the buildings.) No cafeteria, no fitness centers, buildings are aging.

Committee resignation

Jennifer Giannino has decided to leave the committee.

Select Board meeting regarding Proclamation

Select Board was very pleased with the revised Proclamation and the work we did to make some changes. SB accepted the Proclamation with a unanimous vote. They support our work and offered assistance if we need it.

Next meeting

February 23, 2021 at 7 p.m. Please send items for the agenda to Hicks by February 18.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by T. Dzuris. Seconded by R. Donovan. Meeting Adjourned at 8 PM.

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