

Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Town of Chelmsford, MA
April 13, 2021

Members in attendance (remote via Microsoft Teams):

Phil Hicks, Chair

Susan Mackinnon, Clerk

Latosha Dixon, Vice Chair

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

Absent: J. Dave, M. Feeney

Also present: MA State Representative Vanna Howard

Call to Order 7:00 pm.

This meeting is being recorded.

Approval of minutes of March 23, 2021 meeting

P. Hicks asked for a correction to the spelling of Maria Palacio's name. L. Dixon made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. C. Connor Reim seconded. Motion approved.

Conversation with MA State Representative Vanna Howard

Vanna Howard participated in this meeting to report on her work at the Statehouse and to share ideas with this committee. She represents the Seventeenth Middlesex District, Consisting of Chelmsford: Precinct 4; Lowell: Ward 1, Ward 2: Precinct 3, Ward 4: Precincts 2, 3, Wards 10, 11A. She is appointed to the newly formed Joint Committee on Racial Equity, Civil Rights, and Inclusion. The Joint Committee held its first meeting today. Rep Howard reported that its mandate is to advise the legislature in the House and Senate and review existing policies and laws. They aim to dismantle racism and promote equitable opportunities for the residents of Massachusetts. Representative Howard asked about the goals for the DREIC. Hicks told her that we had started with goals based on a survey, but are in the process of rewriting goals that are more accomplishable. As an advising body we cannot make change decisions. We focus on educating people in town and bringing awareness of issues and of people. Dixon noted the many accomplishments of this committee. She will send an email to Rep. Howard. Connor Reim talked about the goal to declare Indigenous Peoples' Day a holiday in October. (October 11, 2021 this year) Representative Howard supports this proposal and has signed on to support a bill in the MA Statehouse. In the city of Lowell, schools will no longer recognize Columbus Day. They will observe Indigenous Peoples' Day going forward. Rep Howard will be happy to speak to the Chelmsford Select Board in support of our resolution. She intends to sign the Anti-Racism Pledge as well. Rep Howard recognized our partnership with Police Chief Spinney as a positive thing, also the Diversity programs offered by the town library.

Review of upcoming Diversity Events

May: ALS Awareness month, Asian Pacific American Heritage month, National Mental Health Awareness Month, World Day for Cultural Diversity

Connor Reim talked about the deaths of George Floyd and Duante Wright and the stress these horrific events cause. She wants our group to do something to recognize and support the community. Petro-Roy spoke about an event in town, perhaps a vigil, perhaps in connection with Juneteenth.

Lattimore spoke about advance planning, bringing up some concerns surrounding Autism Awareness and Acceptance and the different perspectives of different groups. She also reminded us that today is the start of Ramadan. Dixon suggested we reach out to Police Chief Spinney regarding plans for any event. She also asked that we be consistent with groups we represent. Hicks cautioned us to be consistent, continue to reflect back to the proclamation. Petro-Roy wondered if a better plan might be to support other groups planning events and provide resources to the organizers. Connor Reim asked what we can do for the people in our community, to show we stand together, to be uplifting? Dzuris will speak to the Community Services Coordinator, Jen Melanson, to ask for ideas. Cochran suggested a Diversity Day, or a Day of Peace. Mason noted that September 21 is the International Day of Peace and Safety. Dixon asked that we "light" a candle on the webpage in honor of recent lives lost.

Reports from Working Groups

As a continuation of last meeting's discussion about working groups it was agreed that working groups will be more effective if they are task or event oriented. Of immediate interest are Indigenous Peoples' Day, May events, Juneteenth, and Goals. Some goals will be tactical, others involving work with influencers in other groups. Working groups will work best if people get involved in their passions and when one person takes the lead for that issue or event.

S. Mackinnon and L. Cochran will continue to communicate with Chelmsford Schools about curriculum and staffing. S. Mackinnon will lead a group for May events.

C. Connor Reim will lead the group for Indigenous Peoples' Day. Rachel, Brian, and Raffa will also work on a presentation to the Select Board and School Committee to observe October 11, 2021 as IPD.

Petro-Roy will lead a group for Juneteenth. Latosha, Joe and Cherrice will join.

Connor Reim and Hicks will work on a film/lecture series, including work with the town library and perhaps a "Watch Party." Anyone with recommendations for movies, please email them to Phil ASAP.

L. Cochran will lead a group to develop a Day of Peace event to take place on or near September 21. Latosha, Cherrice and Tricia will join.

Dzuris will be the point of contact for updating the webpage and connecting with people in town government.

Please complete the Diversity Training with Point Made Learning by May 15. Our completion will underscore our commitment and sense of importance as we recommend training to the Select Board.

Meeting Schedule

April 27, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by T. Dzuris. Seconded by C. Connor Reim. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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