

Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee
October 6, 2020

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

Absent: Margaret Feeney, Jennifer Giannino

1) Call to Order

The Zoom Meeting linked to Chelmsford Telemedia started at 6pm and was immediately hacked by a number of hecklers making discussion impossible. Please note that attempts were made to ask the hackers to leave the meeting without result. This excerpt from the Open Meeting law is added to show that the committee is aware that public participation was not possible, and no votes will be taken at the meeting.

If technical difficulties arise as a result of utilizing remote participation, the chair (or, in the chair's absence, person chairing the meeting) may decide how to address the situation. Public bodies are encouraged, whenever possible, to suspend discussion while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant's ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at the meeting location. If a remote participant is disconnected from the meeting, the minutes must note that fact and the time at which the disconnection occurred.

The Zoom Meeting was terminated and a new meeting was conducted via Microsoft Teams. Called to order at 7:22 pm.

2) Comments from the Chair

Being unable to conduct this as a public meeting we will not take action on any items tonight. This meeting will be for discussion purposes only.

We will need to discuss technology issues at a future meeting, including how to conduct secure meetings that adhere to Open Meeting Law rules. There is also a need to choose a platform for sharing of ideas online. Google Docs is not the preferred method by all committee members.

3) Continuation of Mission Statement Discussion

Phil Hicks, chair, opened the floor for sharing statements about the group's Mission Statement.

Cherrice Lattimore shared " 1. We honor the uniqueness of each individual and embrace diverse backgrounds, values, and points of view to build a strong, Inclusive community and to prepare students for lives in a multicultural society. 2. The mission of the DREI Committee is to help build an inclusive (School)community grounded in equality, mutual respect, and an understanding of the importance of diversity as it relates to experience as part of the Chelmsford community and as part of communities wish to serve. Such diversity ranges from differences in race, ethnicity, sex, age, or gender identity to

socioeconomic status, religion, disability, or sexual orientation to differences in skill sets and experiences. The Diversity, Racial, Equity and Inclusion committee is committed to exploring and appreciating the richness, opportunities, and challenges of our multicultural community.”

Joe Mason advised us not to get into specifics just yet. Phil Hicks added that we should steer clear of a list of items we wish to champion. We want to provide guidance to groups in town and provide counsel about issues of diversity. Carly Connor Reim agrees that we should be advisors to governing bodies, including schools, law enforcement etc. The mission statement should cover the bases for a wide range of community groups.

Carly Connor Reim shared her suggested Mission Statement: “The Town of Chelmsford DREI Committee is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community by encouraging cooperation and respect among all persons by understanding and eradicating barriers to equity and inclusion, promoting community awareness, and understanding cultural differences. We mean to not only teach respect for one another, but also to celebrate and embrace the traditions and values of the groups within our community. We will advocate for the human and civil rights of all of our residents. Inclusion is a core community value; we aspire to be a community characterized by the value of equality.”

Susan Mackinnon, Tricia Dzuris and other members felt that the last two lines were important statements for the group to accept. Discussion centered around combining ideas from Phil and Carly’s statements. Brian Petro-Roy cautioned that we should strive for brevity in our Mission Statement. Carly Connor Reim reminded us that we should include general topics and fine tune specifics into goals at a future date. Joe Mason offered to create a word map from the text of suggested Mission Statements to help us consolidate common terms. Tricia Dzuris suggested we also look to the towns of Arlington, Brookline and Westford for guidance. They have completed Mission Statements and other information on their websites.

Phil Hicks will consolidate the statements we have to date and present a suggestion for a Mission Statement at the next meeting.

4) Topics for next meeting

*Complete Mission Statement

Address goals for Committee. Committee members were asked to come prepared to share possible goals at the next meeting. Phil Hicks asked that goals be clear, definable and achievable. Cherrice Lattimore mentioned that the Class of 2010 has a group working on diversity with tasks such as providing books to the library. Phil Hicks said that the Unitarian Universalist Church and one of the synagogues in town also have similar groups. He suggested that we establish a way to coordinate a network with like-minded groups.

Rachel Donovan suggested we consult the initial listening session of the Select Board meeting from 6-30-20 to garner comments from the community that may help us set goals. The meeting can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGfaVW0jLUE>

Tricia Dzuris will consult her IT Director to set up future meetings on Microsoft Teams to avoid the hacking we experienced this evening.

5) Next meeting date and time
Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 7 p.m.

6) Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Addendum: links shared to the committee in meeting chat

<https://www.marquette.edu/microsoft-teams/large-gallery-view.php#:~:text=While%20in%20a%20Teams%20meeting,are%20active%20%E2%80%94%20select%20Large%20gallery>

<https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-to-prevent-zoom-bombing-5-simple-tips/>