

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION MINUTES
7:00pm TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2020

* VIRTUAL MEETING *

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 19:05

X	David Martin, Chair	X	Leela Ramachandran (associate)
X	Nathan Cookson	X	Diane Randolph (associate)
X	Sandra Hinds	X	Odeviz Soto
A	Nassra Mgeni	X	Dawn Wang
X	Makena Muindi	X	Charmaine Williams
X	Sunanda Pepalla		

- I. Regular Business
 - a. Notes from the Chair
 - i. **Ground rules for conference calls**
- II. Special Business
 - a. Commission Introductions
 - i. **Associate members to be promoted to full members**
 - ii. **Two new associate members**
 - 1. Simon Lee
 - 2. Julie Onos
 - b. Discussion of Vice Chair and Clerk
 - i. **Nominations for VC and Clerk**
 - 1. **VC responsibilities – work with chair to set detail agenda, although agenda by commission**
 - a. **Nominees: Diane x 4**
 - 2. **Clerk – minutes and other reporting activities**
 - a. **Nominees: Nate**
 - c. Planning for future work, based on the Commission's charge:
 - i. **Facilitate discussion among town residents about issues of diversity and equity**
 - ii. **Gather first-hand experiences in Acton from Under-represented racial, ethnic, and religious groups**
 - iii. **Hear from groups operating in town that are targeted at related issues**
 - iv. **Hear from town departments that work directly with the public**
 - v. **Brainstorm possible actions that can be taken to address any problems found**
 - vi. **Produce a report for the board of selectmen documenting the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion in town, and make appropriate recommendations to address any problems found**
 - d. **What should we do and in what order? Tentative schedule...**

- e. Need baseline – question use of reporting system? Self-report and surveys
- f. Use caution with community based/participatory research – people who are more vocal can drive data – need “ear on the ground” to make sure commission is hearing underserved voices
- g. Need to define mission
- h. Focus on particular areas? Health, others? Housing?
 - i. Baseline may help clarify problem areas where commission should focus
- i. Finding a baseline
 - i. Survey and talk to other groups already doing this work
 - ii. Hear from advocacy groups, departments within town government
- j. Need to hone-in on mission – report is due within a year of 1st meeting (9/2021). Need measurable goals. Community should feel like we heard them, and we should leave them with some tangible benefits. Realistic goals.
- k. Chair thought beginning months would be spent gathering data, final months making recommendations
- l. After gathering data we need to prioritize what we can change within time frame
- m. Has Acton ever had other commission like this or other group that collects diversity information?
 - i. One other short-term group several years ago – nothing available to public at this time
- n. Who are leaders in town who have trust already that might work with this group
- o. How will we set this group up for success/continuation?
 - i. Recommendations to board could be for commission continues in some form
- p. Define vision, mission, moon-shot goals, shared language
- q. Caution in defining goals without input from stakeholders. Need **strategy** for developing goals and engaging the public
- r. Who should we hear from first?
 - i. Reach out to organizations in town – social workers in Acton
 - ii. Police department
 - iii. Community/neighbors/residents
 - iv. We need to be intentional with our time
- s. Is there a budget? What are our resources? How is the town putting weight behind this group?
 - i. No specific budget. We can draw on town resources/town manager to get things we need
 - ii. May need interpreters for community forums for example
 - iii. Not having budget when we need it may lose momentum, but knowing when we can ask for funds can help planning
 - iv. Town manager has discretionary funds for public forums and that kind of thing
 - v. Define mission/vision/baseline for next meeting and give as much time as possible to hearing from community/groups

- vi. Draft vision, mission, for next time (subcommittees must also have open meetings, but may ask informally for recommendations). Phone calls are better.
 - 1. Definition of terms
 - a. Diversity - requires collaboration
 - b. Equity – requires collaboration
 - c. Inclusion – requires collaboration
 - d. Other
 - e. Makena
 - 2. Mission statement
 - a. Vision and mission
 - b. Leela
 - 3. Goals
 - a. Should come out of what we hear from community
 - b. Could have macro level goal that wouldn't limit community goals
 - c. Sunanda will wait until next meeting so mission/vision are defined
- vii. Who should we hear from next time?
 - 1. Maynard and Chelmsford may have groups like ours
- t. Agenda item
 - i. How to do outreach/get representation from more than your social network

III. Closing Items

- a. Comments from residents
 - i.
- b. Future meetings and calendar events
 - i. Could we meet Thursday 10/8/2020
- c. Adjourn

TIME ADJOURNED: 21:01 Adjourned by vote 7 to 0