

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION MINUTES
7:00pm THURSDAY December 14, 2023

Present:

X	David Martin, liaison	X	Lingya Zhou
	Makena Muindi	X	Sandra Hinds, clerk
X	Melissa Kaplan Morse, co-chair	X	Suravi Bhatia, student
X	Sunanda Pepalla	X	Wanjiku Gachugi, liaison
X	Zayd Dhasthageer, student		
	Diane Randolph Jones, co-chair		

I. Regular Business

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Notes from the Co-chairs—No reports.
2. Updates from the DEI Director:
 - A. There have been 4 reported incidents and all indicated they were racially motivated. Two of those also indicated ethnicity. The rights violated of the 4 bias reports were 2 in employment, 1 public accommodation, and the other was services. The document has all the categories and rights violated.
 - B. Two events took place: The first one was on November 1, 2023. Laura Ducharme, the Community Services Coordinator, organized a seminar for the town employees and general school staff called “Fostering Cultural Humility: A Multi-Sectoral Approach to Integrating Haitian Migrants in New Communities.”
The second event was on November 14 and it was called “Welcoming and Supporting Our New Neighbors—A Community Conversation.” At the time of Wanjiku’s report, there were eleven families (including 27 children). The families are from Haiti, and Central and South America.

II. Special Business

Our guest was James MacRae, Veterans Services District Director. He gave valuable information about his role in helping veterans to get their state and federal benefits. Some assistance include service records, prescriptions, health, dental and eye care as well as other resources. James also oversees the Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. He is currently assisting twelve veterans in Acton and one in Boxborough. In addition, he has a mailing list of 810 veterans, and he is working on a veterans’ census.

III. Committee Liaisons’ reports:

Melissa—Attended the public meeting organized by the Open Space Committee and Recreation Department. They are working on their goals for the next seven years. The goals include universal accessibility/opportunities for everyone, outreach and how to use parcels of land for open space.

David-- Reported that the Select Board met on December 4, 2023 and created a policy for religious displays on one part of the town common. Shortly after that date, there was a community led ceremony and the first menorah was placed on the common.

The Pride group will meet on January 4, 2024 to start planning the fair and drag show. Those interested in attending the meeting can contact Wanjiku or the Rec. Dept.

At the next DEIC meeting we will start working on ideas for a resource fair in 2024.

IV. Closing Items

Minutes for November 9, 2023 will be approved at the next meeting.

Confirm upcoming meeting – Thursday, January 11, 2024.

Adjourn

Sandra moved to adjourn and Zayd seconded. Unanimously approved.

Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.