

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION MINUTES  
7:00 p.m. THURSDAY September 12th, 2024

Present:

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

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Regular Business**

**1. Notes from the Co-Chairs**

- a. None, due to summer break, as other committees get started will have more updates.

**2. Updates from the DEI Director**

- Incident report: Since June mtg, there have been three new incidents, two closed and one under investigation.
- DEI volunteer requirement during the school year: High School student, flexible remote schedule, ~5 hours a week and work on projects like flyers, emailing panelists.
- DEI intern from UMass Amherst successfully completed (20 hours/week for summer, paid internship)
  - Summarized and categorized Commitment Day info in January
  - REACH workshops theme “Acton for Pro Action was” held in Boston (HR, Police, Planning dept, conservation, library dept and other prominent leaders from town government)
  - Feedback on DEI and town website
  - Searched for grants and successfully found one.
  - Fall event planning.

**Commissioner Updates and Discussion**

**1. New Commissioner Search**

- i. We can have upwards of eleven commissioners of which two can be students.
- ii. Recruitment plan for commissioners (Action: Sandra and Zayd)

**2. Housing Production Plan Group Liaison**

- i. Housing production update (Need volunteer from DEI Commission, reach out to Melissa if interested)
- ii. Plan was defined in 2020 and looking to update with current housing needs.

- iii. Looking for volunteers on the advisory committee, spots still available. Meet monthly from Sept to April, virtual one hour meeting from 9-5 pm, working group led by the town manager and attendees will be town residents.

### **3. Volunteer Form Comments**

- i. Review Acton website, search form before reading current comments already made.
- ii. Review for missing details or details that are not inclusive of or off putting, accessibility, make demographic information optional.
- iii. How do we engage and make volunteer demographics more diverse? How can DEIC contribute?

### **4. Communication in Action Unlimited and Exchange**

- i. Online outreach for community engagement, pictures of events, author articles on interesting conversations, important roles like the DEI director and DEI office.
- ii. Recommend Acton exchange as it is focused on Acton and can sign up with notification choices.

### **5. Vision Statement and Strategic Plan for October Meeting**

- i. What is our vision and strategic plan as we move from an infancy to an established committee? There is a prime opportunity to look at our values and vision individually and as a group.
- ii. Set the stage and goals for moving the vision forward while addressing challenging changes (tactical and strategic, recruitment, retention, what worked and what did not, transparent conversation)

### **6. Ideas for the new year**

- a. Sandra: Telephone booths repurposed to record original poems by Concord residents. AB Cultural Council gives five grants every year. What can we repurpose in Acton? (upcycling, cultural, sustainability)
- b. Invite ABCC to understand more about grants, grantees, and topics (inform, learn, move forward with collaboration)
- c. Idea proposed by Bettina Abe for Juneteenth Walk  
Need permission for three stops and Acton Congregational Church for parking,  
stop #1 Meeting house hill (speaker, poets, or other activities)  
stop #2 Town Hall/Monument (flags and have a different activity)  
stop #3 Arboretum (local band, food, art and sculpture display, message in the phone booth structure)

Next steps: Discuss with David and rest of Commission. Write a memo to the Select Board and present it at a Select Board meeting.

Other ideas: Juneteenth play on the steps of Town Hall. Get other committees involved (Action: Wangchiku) like the CBE walk last year

with forty organizations and reading at Silver Unicorn. Model after previous walk from Town Hall to Kelly's Corner. Concrete plan before taking it to the Select Board. Silver Unicorn had a list of books (kids and adults) and did a reading. National Holiday since 2022 but states adopted it before.

### **Closing Items**

- 7. Approve minutes from previous meeting (Sunanda moved, Diane seconded)**
- 8. Confirm upcoming meetings and events – October 10, 2024**
  1. Book a room at the library or Town Hall.
  2. Consider an earlier time to meet in person.
- 9. Adjourn (Sunanda moved, Zayd seconded)**