

## **Brookline Commission for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations Meeting**

January 4, 2016, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Public Health Building – Denny Room

**Commissioners Present:** Sandy Batchelder, Malcolm Cawthorne, Wesley Chin, Alex Coleman, Ernest Frey, Tony Naro, Kelly Race, Dwaigh Tyndal, Kea van der Ziel

### **Liaisons and Staff Present:**

Lloyd Gellineau - Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations, Michael Gropman - Police Department,

**Commissioners Absent:** Brian Myles, Enid Shapiro, Ginny Vaz

**Liaisons Absent:** Ben Chang – School Committee, Bernard Greene – BOS

Reporter: Kelly Race

### **Minutes**

Meeting called to order by Alex Coleman, Chair at 6:35 p.m.

Motion to appoint Kelly Race to take the minutes for tonight's meeting. Approved by unanimous vote.

### **Review and Vote on Minutes from Previous Meetings**

Commissioners agreed to defer the vote on the meeting minutes for December 16, 2015 to our next meeting because we did not have copies of the latest version of the minutes.

### **Discussion on Statement from the Commission at the BOS meeting tomorrow evening (1/5/16)**

Alex provided an overview. Tomorrow's BOS meeting is a public hearing on the reports of discriminatory behavior within the police department.

The topic of our meeting tonight will be broadened to include a pattern of discriminatory behavior against African Americans in Brookline. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to determine whether we want to make a statement as a commission at tomorrow's BOS meeting. If we cannot come to consensus then commissioners are free to speak tomorrow but need to speak as individuals.

Tony watched a 15 minute clip on You Tube from the last meeting. Tony feels we should not make a statement at the BOS meeting. We need to listen tonight and we should have public comment tonight.

Dwaigh feels it is problematic that we have been waiting for the report since 2010 and we are still saying we need more information. There are many good officers in Brookline. We should not let the actions of the few taint all officers. Dwaigh feels we need to take the report and take action with what we see in the report. We can encourage the BOS to look at best practices of other municipalities to increase diversity. We know there is a racial profiling issue.

Ernie said we are talking about an attitude or condition that exists in Brookline. The Commission is supposed to work on changing the attitude in Brookline. Ernie was very concerned about the comment in the report that an individual does not know to whom to address concerns or were concerned about retaliation. We should propose to the BOS that anywhere there is an impasse we could refer it to a trained mediator. We questioned whether the CDO would have the authority to hear the employee. Lloyd clarified that there is no policy that says that the employee has to go to the union or their supervisor first. The CDO has the option of going through supervision depending on the safety of the employee.

Kea is concerned that the report on the Climate Survey is only a Powerpoint. She is disappointed that only 30% of employees responded. She would like to get more detail on the responses. At our next meeting the commissioners should be prepared to discuss the report and ask the consultants for more information / details / different format.

Kelly would like the CDICR to make a statement to the BOS. She agreed with Tony that we shouldn't comment on the facts of the cases of the two policy officers but we should request that the BOS investigate the process thoroughly.

Malcolm would also like us to make a statement to the BOS that they had dragged their feet in giving us a charge to assess the racial climate. That committee begged for a charge but now we have actual allegations that we can't investigate. We should speak out about this and make it public.

Key ideas were discussed for the statement. The BOS have created a culture of racism through its practices of hiring, lack of diversity, supporting and promoting a person who was recorded using the "N" word. And a lack of expediency. We need expediency. The BOS need to provide more demonstrable support behind the CDO.

Michael indicated that there is an annual report that lists the complaints by employees against employees and the outcome. This should be available through Internal Affairs.

We feel that the BOS need to take some responsibility and put some muscle behind their words. The commission and the CDO stand available as vehicles to change.

Tony typed the statement to the BOS that we drafted as a group. Kelly agreed to make minor edits. There was a motion to approve the statement and have Alex deliver the statement at tomorrow evening's hearing. It was a unanimous vote 9-0-0. Several members of the commission plan to attend tomorrow's hearing.

The statement is inserted here:

The Board of Selectmen as an institution of town government has allowed a culture of institutional racism to exist through its past hiring practices. As an example, in the history of this Town's existence there have been two department heads who are people of color. In the past five years the Town has allowed a firefighter who, without dispute, used the N word, be promoted to a supervisory position. And the culture that such actions foster has led to situations which has brought us here today. The Commission for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations calls upon you, as the elected leaders of this Town to exercise your responsibilities and duties, as commissioners of the police and fire departments, as the elected representatives of this Town, to stamp out this culture. There must not be a delay. You must act with expedience. There is a history in this Town of not taking action on these matters in a timely manner. You must not repeat this history. This is a matter of extreme urgency which the board of selectmen need to address with actions, not words, now.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. by Alex Coleman, Chair.