

Minutes of the Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations – 1/20/2021

Remote via Zoom and recorded

Commissioners present: Joan Lancourt, Bob Lepson, Irving Allen, Sandy Batchelder, Malcolm Cawthorne, Jessica Chicco, Malcolm Doldron, Rezaul Haque, Mariah Nobrega, Kea van der Ziel, Grace Yung Watson, Bishnu Tamang (awaiting swearing in); Ihssane Leckey, Commission candidate

Commissioners absent: Eloise Lawrence

Liaisons present: Raul Fernandez, Kazi Stafford, Casey Hatchett, Caitlin Starr, and various guests as below

Members of the public: John VanScoyoc, Anne Weaver, Mark Gray, Neil Gordon, Ryan Black, Savyon Cohen, Wamwega Shaw, Danielle Mendola

Minutes of 12/16 approved with minor edits, moved Nobrega, 2nd Doldron, unanimous of all voting Commissioners present as above with exception of Haque, who abstained.

Public Comment – none at this time

Introduction of Rezaul Haque as newest voting commissioner

Introduction of Community Engagement Strategist, Carolina San Miguel, of Brazilian, Bolivian and Indigenous descent, worked as an architect and then an urban planner, in areas of community development and with youth. Has a PhD from the Harvard School of Design.

Bird Guest of the Racial Equity Group gave a presentation on the Shared Roadmap of a Racial Equity Framework Mindset. The project has been delayed due to COVID-19, and the inability to be present in person. The need for this project to be based on facts and data-driven, not on feelings, was emphasized. A Racial Equity Audit Assessment is in progress. This will be followed by an evaluation of the results, and a report summarizing the findings. An 'Equity Eye' Analysis Toolkit will be shared with department heads and other steps, all with the intent that Racial Equity will become standard operating procedure. Questions were answered.

Deborah Brown of the Brookline Improvement Coalition gave the history of the coalition which has the goal of improving access to decent, safe and sanitary affordable housing in Brookline, and the need for a strategic plan which should be coming as early as 2/2021, and finalized by the end of 3/2021. Her presentation included what makes affordable housing difficult in Brookline, the need for green construction practices (including fossil fuel free construction), the need for measurable goals, and the 5 priorities of the plan. She stressed the need for additional board members with expertise in finance, development and fund-raising, as well as from the under-represented communities, the need for a Capital Improvement Plan, and collaboration between BIC, BHA and the HAB.

Vijay Fisch, junior at Needham High School, was introduced by Malcolm Cawthorne. Vijay has lived in Brookline and has hopes of bringing a program he started in Needham to Brookline. His group, Equal Justice in Needham works on police reform and other issues. They have started a 'Placard Program', which entails placing "You Are Welcome Here" signs in windows of local shops. These signs include a QR code that takes the user to the Civil Rights Division of the AG's office if they have complaints about their

treatment. Suggestions were made that there should be links to more positive content, such as ways to make connections within the community.

New Committees within CDICR. The need to vote on 2 new committees was discussed, the Patterns of Racism Committee and a committee to address the needs of and engage members of the various immigrant communities. One vote was taken on the formation of both committees, moved by Nobrega, seconded by Chicco. Approved by Cawthorne, Lancourt, Lepson, van der Ziel, Allen, Haque, Doldron, Yung Watson, Nobrega, Chicco, Batchelder. Malcolm Cawthorne and Bob Lepson will co-chair the Patterns of Racism Committee, and Jessica Chicco will chair the Engaging Immigrant Communities.

Announcement of Google Drive documents where committee chairs and liaisons can post updates in a timely fashion prior to CDICR meetings. Efforts to make this viewable to the public is needed. Deadline to post is weekend prior to next meeting.

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Next meeting 2/10 at 6:30 PM