

Brookline Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations Meeting

January 22, 2020 - 6:30-8:30pm

Commissioners present: Sandy Batchelder, Malcolm Cawthorne, Jessica Chicco, Malcolm Doldrom, Steven Laduzinski, Joan Lancourt, Eloise Lawrence, Robert Lepson, Mariah Nobrega, Kelly Race, Kea van der Ziel

Liaisons present: Sharon Abramowitz (School Committee), Casey Hatchett (Police-standing in for Michael Gropman), Emre Muftu (BHS), Lloyd Gellineau

Not present: Raul Fernandez (Select Board)

Meeting called to order by Joan at 6:30pm.

Introductions

This was the first meeting which Malcolm D. and Steve joined as Commissioners. We were also joined by Holly Carter, a diversity and inclusion consultant, Elvira Perez, a prospective commissioner, and Christina (last name?) who is an intern with the ODICR.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the November 13, 2019 meeting approved with 7 in favor and 3 abstentions with the following edits: added Mariah Nobrega as in attendance, added last name of petitioner Amy Hummell and one small typo.

Liaison Role Description

The Commission reviewed and adopted the revised Liaison Role as written, with the addition of mention of Brookline High School in the list of liaisons, and the understanding that the BHS liaison will have a slightly different role given that they don't formally represent the high school. Commission voted unanimously to adopt the liaison role description. This will go on the website and all liaisons were asked to share it with their respective groups.

Discussion of CDICRs Role in Addressing Diversity, Inclusion & Equity in Brookline

Commissioners had a discussion of what role we should play, and what it means for us to be proactive. One meaning of proactive was to make diversity, equity and inclusion everyone's responsibility rather than just the responsibility of CDICR; in other words, we need to bring these issues to the forefront on other Brookline boards and commissions. This was followed by a discussion on community engagement, and the Community Engagement Plan which the town is undertaking. Both Mariah and Malcolm D. will be active and will restart the CDICR Community Engagement Committee, formerly the Outreach Committee. We also explored the idea of offering diversity training for all new commissioners. Casey also provided many ideas of organizations active in the town that would be good for the Commission to do outreach to.

A discussion of the need to conduct training for current CDICR commissioners on DEI followed. It was pointed out that Commissioners would benefit from this training as we talk about issues

of diversity and race out in the community. It was pointed out that in this process, we also need to explore and share our own identities in relation to DEI with each other as a commission. Holly Carter offered to create a training that would provide us with common language we can use as a commission and to give us an opportunity to “meld” as a group. It was decided that the CDICR would use its February meeting time for such a training. Joan and Holly will put together a proposal for what that time will look like.

Commissioners had a conversation about the importance of community engagement, and the need for CDICR to have its own community engagement strategy. The ODICR is currently on track to meet the June 1, 2020 date set out in the Community Engagement Plan Warrant Article, and consultants from BU who will be working on that project will be on board by the end of February.

The idea of the Commission developing a DEI report card was discussed as a way for the town to assess itself, but it was also pointed out that currently, government entities have not been formally tasked with DEI goals, and thus, it would not be fair to grad them on metrics that they have not been told to deliver on. Further discussion of this is needed.

Commissioners also discussed the need to create CDICR committees with regard to the creation of the Racial Equity Advancement Fund (REAF), the Citizen Complaint Process, and the Community Engagement Plan. It was suggested that a special short meeting be scheduled as soon as possible in light of our using our February meeting time for the training.

New Business

Sister City event with Cuban poet Richard Blanco is taking place on February 28th. The Lunar New Year Celebration at the high school is taking place on February 8th, 3-5pm. Warrant Article submissions to be made between February 6 and March 6, and anyone interested in help drafting an article can contact Mariah and/or Kea.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.