

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

April 15, 2020 - 6:30-8:30pm

**Commissioners present:** Malcolm Cawthorne, Jessica Chicco, Malcolm Doldron, Joan Lancourt, Eloise Lawrence, Robert Lepson, Mariah Nobrega, Kelly Race, Kea van der Ziel. Irving Allen, Sandy Batchelder, **Liaisons present:** Lloyd Gellineau, Emre Muftu (BHS), Raul Fernandez (Select Board), Sharon Abramowitz (School Committee), Casey Hatchett (Police),

**Not present:** Steven Laduzinski,

Meeting called to order at 6:32pm.

**Rollcall at beginning of meeting:** Joan-present; Bob-present; Eloise-present; Malcolm C-present; Jessica-present; Malcolm D-present; Mariah-present; Kelly-present. Additional members - Irving Allen, Sandy Batchelder - joined later.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Kelly made some typo corrections. Minutes approved unanimously by rollcall: Joan-aye; Bob-yes; Eloise-aye; Malcolm C-aye; Jessica-aye; Kea-aye Malcolm D-aye; Mariah-aye; Kelly-aye.

### **Public Comment by Deborah Brown**

Very little in Town budget that looks at issues impacting the poor. Especially in light of coronavirus we should look more thoughtful to put in place real, effective safeguards. Dramatically declining resources and increasing needs. As Town begins to put together a committee (first meeting of Town-School partnership on Friday) to say we want you to think about poor people. Shouldn't treat budget process as business as usual. Additional services, including mental health, that we are not providing now, should be added. Important for commissioners to be present as these conversations unfold. One opportunity could be to voice priorities.

Commissioners discussed the possibility of making a statement of priorities that we can refer back to along the way.

Acknowledged that Sandy and Irving and Raul joined the meeting.

### **Follow-up to February CDICR Training Session**

Emre and Malcolm C led conversation on the need for more teachers of color in the high school. Posed questions to the group: Did you have any teachers of color in your K-12 experience; what year and what subject? Were there any other adults that were people of color in your K-12 experience? How do you think that impacted your K-12 experience?

Challenge is identifying and retaining teachers of color. This requires intentional work and is fruitful when done. Retention is difficult and good hires are quickly moved into administration

leaving a vacuum in teachers. More outreach for hiring is needed, better support for teachers of color for retention. Need to institutionalize support systems for teachers of color.

### **Discussion of CDICR's Role in Combatting Anti-Asian Racism in Brookline**

Joan summarized Anti-Asian Discrimination presentation, which included specific suggested actions. When racism is discussed Asian-Americans are often left out of that conversation. Guidance on this issue sent to the school district in early February to set measures, and tone, and to look out for incidents of racism, but the advisory had no apparent impact. The School Committee hasn't taken this up as an issue. We discussed potential actions: a roundtable discussion on best practices for schools; invitation to school leadership to our meetings; make the issue more visible on the town website (e.g. "click here if you've experienced/seen harassment"); post by-stander guidance in visible place; create a social media presence. ODICR is not receiving reports which is of concern because we know they're happening. One hate crime incident reported to PD 2 weeks ago.

We need to more actively partner with BAAFN, and look at establishing a liaison, not of them to us, but of us to them. The Commission also needs more of a social media presence to reach people during this time. There was a suggestion of setting up a working group to do outreach to the Asian community, and make tangible suggestions at our May meeting as to which groups with whom we should try to establish more formal liaisons. The Working Group will be Casey, Kea, Lloyd, Malcolm C., Irving and Joan.

### **Updates: Community Engagement, REAF WA, Citizen Complaint WA**

Community Engagement: sent out survey to organizations and department heads. On course to have a report from BU by the end of May.

REAF: recently met and reviewed document incorporating changes made at last CDICR meeting. A next step is to convene virtually to bring together various groups in town to talk about REAF's RFP process. The town's plan is to draw funds for REAF from the mitigation funds, rather than tax money.

Citizen Complaint: There has been no success in establishing this working group thus far. The commission member who had expressed interest in working on this issue, Steve Laduzinski, has been absent for several months due to a personal issue. In our discussion about timing, there was a general consensus that we could not wait until Fall. Sandy and Eloise will be in touch and come up with a to-do list and figure out what resources we need (e.g. law students to do some research on complaint processes in other cities) explore possible options for an effective citizen complaint process for Brookline.

### **Updates: Housing Affordability Forums; Employment Committee**

Housing Affordability Forums: moving ahead with first forum via zoom on June 14, 2020. The program will include pretty much the same panel planned for the postponed March 29th event, and planning for 2 more forums is already underway: one likely in July about successful efforts made elsewhere to increase housing affordability, and one in the Fall exploring how to adapt

those successes to Brookline, and come out of that final Forum with a vision and strategy for moving forward in Brookline.

**New Business**

Raul: virtual town halls on 4/22 at 10am, hosted by Heather Hamilton, with faith communities.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42pm.