

**Minutes: Brookline Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations Meeting
Emergency Meeting to Issue a Statement on Anti-racist Action Needed by the Town**

June 4, 2020 – 5:30-6:00pm

Commissioners present: Irving Allen, Sandy Batchelder, Jessica Chicco, Malcolm Doldron, Joan Lancourt, Robert Lepson, Mariah Nobrega, Kelly Race, Kea van der Ziel.

Liaisons present: Lloyd Gellineau, Emre Muftu (BHS), Raul Fernandez (Select Board)

Not present: Malcolm Cawthorne, Steven Laduzinski, Sharon Abramowitz (School Committee), Casey Hatchett (Police)

Rollcall at beginning of meeting: Irving-present; Sandy-present; Joan-present; Bob-present; Jessica-present; Malcolm D-present; Mariah-present; Kelly-present, Kea-present.

Commissioners met to review a draft statement to the Select Board from the Commission in support of the nation-wide protests against the murder of multiple people of color by the police. Relatively small edits were made, and a fourth call to action to create a task force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline was added.

A brief period of public comment followed. Arthur Conquest informed the group of a planned racial justice march on June 5 at 4pm starting in Cleveland Circle.

The statement, as edited (and pasted below), was adopted by unanimous vote.

Vote: Maria – yes; Bob – yes; Irving – yes; Jessica – yes; Kea – yes; Kelly – yes; Malcolm D – yes; Joan – yes; Sandy – yes.

**Brookline Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations (CDICR) Statement
on Needed Anti-racist Actions by the Town**

Inequitable government policies and practices hold racism and white supremacy in place – even and especially right here in Brookline. There is an urgent need to change those policies and practices. While people may be eager to speak out, send money, and protest, recent events remind us once again we all must do more. We all must continuously act to make changes that address the racism, especially racism occurring right here in Brookline. If we do not act, these outrages will continue to happen, again and again and yet again. One key way to stop them is for all of us to start to address the most fundamental example of institutional racism: the fact that the voices of people of color are excluded from all levels of Brookline's decision-making processes.

The CDICR has recently called upon the Select Board, the School Committee, and the Advisory Committee to include marginalized people in the decision-making about the budget cuts that must be made as a result of the pandemic. We said in no uncertain terms that the voices of those most affected by the pandemic and the cuts must be at the table when discussions and decisions are made. The evidence of the need for inclusive decision-making is clear and present: for example, the pink slips that PSB has issued, which targeted teachers with less than three years of employment, has wiped out the painfully slow progress the schools have made in the past few years in hiring and retaining more teachers of color. This is a consequence of the union practice of seniority, itself another practice that keeps institutional racism in place. No one is innocent here!

And sadly, but not surprisingly, the last few days have also elevated another long-simmering example of people of color being refused a seat at the table: a sickening yet ultimately hopeful thread of emails exposing yet another racist Brookline practice - the process by which appointments are made to the Advisory Committee. Two qualified people of color were explicitly denied seats on the Advisory Committee. Less public, but of equal concern, are many of the so-called 'qualifications' for membership on a number of other Town boards.

Finally, despite the laudatory condemnation by Police Chief Lipson of the murder in Minneapolis, the CDICR is, of course, cognizant of the need for the Brookline Police to do far more than training if they are to succeed in becoming truly anti-racist - as outlined in the comprehensive letter about reimagining policing from Select Board member Raul Fernandez, presented at the Select Board meeting of June 2. Again, elevating voices of people of color to additional positions of power will advance this work.

The mandate of the CDICR is to proactively advance, promote and advocate for the elimination of discriminatory barriers; for better and more communication between all groups; and to increase the capacity of public and private institutions to foster social justice, inclusion and equity. To this end, identifying and articulating the patterns of racist policies and practices is core to our 'reason for being'. We see that Brookline is at a crossroads. We as a community can continue the racist practices and approaches that have brought us to this tragic point, or we can choose to change the way the town government does things. Let's start - right here, right now, in Brookline - to make the changes we know need to be made. To change the world we live in, a world of toxic injustice, we must start here at home.

So once again, the CDICR calls upon the governing bodies of Brookline - the Select Board, the School Committee, the Advisory Committee, and all the other boards and commissions, and sub committees of all those bodies as well as Town departments – to:

- 1) Immediately *include (as in 'diversity' and 'inclusion')* a range of voices representing those most affected by the decisions being made in all the Town's decision-making forums;
- 2) Appoint the qualified people of color who have already applied to the Advisory Committee;

- 3) Revise the process by which individuals are recruited and appointed to Advisory Committee and all other Town committees.
- 4) Create a task force to reimagine policing in Brookline.

The CDICR stands ready to collaborate in the implementation of each of these recommendations.