

DEI Commission Meeting
July 22, 2021
Meeting held via Zoom

Present:

Peju Champion	Sue Rushfirth
Katina Fontes	Nuha Muntasser
Yana Bloomstein	Sue Abrams
Stephanie Oliver	Tanisha Tate
Nancy Kimble	Vona Hill
Nalini Luthra	

Absent: Susan Tripi, Joanna Steffey

Also present:

Jennifer Roberts (Select Board Liaison), Henry Hayes (Town Manager), Scott Nix (SPD)
Sudbury TV, Sylvia Nersessian, Bill Schineller (Select Board Liaison)

Agenda:

- Welcome.
- Open meeting by roll call vote.
- Public Comments.
- Bill S. 465 update (Report included in agenda packet)
- DEI Commission outreach updates
- Discuss and possibly vote on establishing sub-committees
- Reviewing and amending meeting calendar
- Celebrating Community event planning update
- Quarterly update to Select Board
- Review and approve minutes from July 8, 2021 meeting.
- Upcoming agenda items/next meeting planning.

1. Call to order

Co-Chair Muntasser, following acknowledgement of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 7:35PM.

Vote taken to call the meeting to order:

Sue Rushfirth	Aye	Nalini Luthra	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye
Yana Bloomstein	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye
Nancy Kimble	Aye	Peju Champion	Aye
Stephanie Oliver	Aye	Vona Hill	Aye
Tanisha Tate	Aye		

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

3. Bill 465

Nuha updated the commission on her outreach to Senator Jamie Eldridge's office. The fact sheet from his office is included in the meeting packet, as is an overview from Nancy. Senator Eldridge was not available for tonight but his office will look for future dates for him to come. Nuha hopes to have an update at the next meeting.

4. Outreach Updates

Scituate (update from Nancy)

The Commission's charge was very specific:

To review Town policies, procedures and budgets, for the purpose of advancing equity and justice for all, with a focus on eradicating from the Town of Scituate, oppression, racism, injustice and violence against all people.

The group, made up of members of very specific groups (for example, town employees, clergy, the town HR Director) had no formal training, although some members had professional experience working in the area of DEI.

The schools have hired a Director of DEI. Nancy will talk with him to see if he can come and speak to us.

Sudbury Public Schools/LSRHS (update from Nalini)

She has contacted the schools and is waiting to hear back from both SPS and LS.

Concord (update from Stephanie)

Although there is no DEI Commission to date, the Select Board is discussing it at their next meeting.

There are several community groups active in DEI work and collaboration among the groups is seen as very important.

The schools have recently appointed the METCO Director as the DEI Director.

Wayland (update from Yana)

The DEI Commission was formed in June but other committees have been working prior to this, including an HR Committee and a Town Manager's Advisory Group, which has established subcommittees.

They completed a Lived Experience survey based on the Needham survey. The Needham survey received 93 responses and resulted in a comprehensive report whose goal was to point out discrimination in the town. Wayland had about 20 responses.

Needham's survey and website are good resources. It would also be useful to speak to them about their work. A social scientist designed the survey and collated the data. Those working on this went to Town Meeting in an effort to engage the whole community. Their questions are available, as are Wayland's.

Bethany Hadvab, Sudbury Town Social Worker (update from Sue A.)

Bethany strongly advised the Commission to begin the work with a consultant. A consultant will have experience in the best ways to go into the community and would help avoid working based on our own perspectives.

She stressed the need to make decisions based on research rather than just what we think is a good idea and to work slowly and deliberatively, listening and working to understand what people share.

This work is in parallel to our own personal journey.

The group would like to have her come and speak to us.

Shrewsbury (update from Katina)

Their group was very large and that presented a challenge. They have a 1 year limited charge-a recommendation to a future group.

Subcommittees do most of the work and report to the larger group.

There is a researcher on their task force who is collecting stories. They cautioned to think about the barriers to sharing stories.

They are doing a multiple choice survey.

North Andover (update from Sue R.)

Their committee was large-18 members, with a large number of town employees and representatives from town agencies. There were specific requirements for membership in the committee.

They had a very rocky beginning and ended up regrouping and starting over. They recommend working with an independent consultant because everyone is away from their own skill sets.

They focused on small groups meeting with the consultant to build a strong foundation.

Lexington (update from Nalini)

She is having difficulty getting responses from her inquiries. They have looked at racism as a health issue.

Discussion:

- There are some common threads throughout the research done: the data collection is important, and the best surveys are professionally created.
- Storytelling needs to be carefully managed...working with a social worker would be important. Asking people to relive these experiences requires an ethical and respectful approach. It also needs someone experienced in issues of race dynamics. There should be guidelines and attention to minors' and students' rights
- Data collection: the challenge is to take qualitative data and put it into quantitative form. This requires a professional.
- The library would like to collaborate with us. Please let Nalini know anything you would like to share with Esme.

5. Establishing Subcommittees

Suggestions:

- Establish subcommittees for different aspects of the mission statement. Note: the OML would still be in play no matter what we call them. Meeting with fewer than a quorum and not working on anything requiring deliberation would be best to avoid being out of compliance.
- Schedule one whole group meeting a month. Subcommittees meet in between and report back to the whole group.

- The question of how to pay for a consultant came up. Bethany had suggested writing a grant. Sudbury Foundation as well as other resources were included in the update in the packet for the meeting. The Historic Commission did an RFP and went to the FinCom for \$5,000. Chief Nix said the SPD has a clinician who might be helpful. Sue A. will contact Tricia Brunner at the Sudbury Foundation for more advice. Nancy noted that the MetroWest Health Foundation, another possible resource, will not be meeting until September. She will check with them.
- What do we want a consultant to help us with? Some ideas:
 - Training as Commission members
 - State of the town...create, execute and interpret data collection
 - How to craft a strategy for the DEI
- Members who talked to individual towns will go back to their contacts and get more information on researchers, consultants, etc. They will report back at the next meeting.

6. Meeting Schedule

There was general agreement to meet once a month, with subcommittees working on the alternate weeks. They will report back at the meeting of the whole Commission.

7. Community Event Planning

Nalini did some research with Henry and Scott. The decision is to start small. There was discussion around details; Haskell has better parking than the town center: the Board of health needs to be contacted: Reverend Matty will support whatever we choose to do. Perhaps there could be collaboration with restaurants.

Yana is planning to attend the Ashland Culture Fest this weekend. She reached out to the coordinator but is waiting for a response.

Susan Tripi reached out to a LGBTQ+ community and they are interested in sharing their experiences.

8. Other

- Susan Tripi (via Yana) asked about in person meetings, noting that the dynamics would be very different if we met in person. She offered to work on a survey and asked that there be more communication between meetings.
- Regarding in person meetings-we should figure out how to accommodate those Commission members and public who choose to attend via zoom.
- Agenda setting: Nuha will email the Commission to request agenda items prior to the meeting. It was suggested that there be more generic items as well as some standing items such as updates from ongoing work, rather than explicitly naming everything.

9. Quarterly Report to the Select Board

Sue A. will create a draft of key points from previous minutes. A discussion of the draft will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

10. Minutes of the July 8 Meeting

Approval was postponed until the next meeting.

11. Upcoming Agenda Items

Possible agenda items include:

- Update from the PR and Social Media subcommittee
- Budget/Consultant
- Calendar for meetings
- Quarterly update
- General reports update
- Inviting Bethany Hadvab to speak

A motion to adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Stephanie and seconded by Sue A.

Vote:

Peju Champion	Aye		
Katina Fontes	Aye	Stephanie Oliver	Aye
Yana Bloomstein	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye
Nancy Kimble	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye
Nalini Luthra	Aye		

Meeting adjourned at 10:24PM

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Abrams
Co-Clerk