

**DEI Commission Meeting
February 10, 2022
Meeting held via Zoom**

Present:

Nuha Muntasser	Janine Taylor	Paula Hudson
Karyn Jones (COD liason)	Tanisha Tate	Yana Bloomstein
Katina Fontes	Sue Abrams	
Stephanie Oliver	Sue Rushfirth	
Nalini Luthra	Joanna Steffey	

Absent: Vona Hill, Peju Champion

Also present:

Henry Hayes (Town Manager), Sudbury TV, Jen Roberts (Sudbury Select Board), JCH, Kay Bell
Nancy Kimble, aPriori webinars, Janie Dretler, Tim O'Brien, Lisa Kouchakchian

Agenda:

1. Welcome and open meeting by roll call vote.
2. Public comments.
3. Land acknowledgement and moment of reflection.
4. Select Board update from Jen Roberts on extension and funding request.
5. Confirming subcommittee membership and administrative updates.
6. Subcommittee and working group updates.
7. DEIC member applications.
8. Address letter from Sudbury Clergy Association.
9. Welcome Karyn Jones from COD and update.
10. Review and approve minutes of January 13, 2021 meeting.
11. 9:30 PM: Adjourn meeting by roll call vote.

Call to order

Co-Chair Muntasser, following acknowledgement of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 7:37PM.

Vote taken to call the meeting to order:

Nalini Luthra	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye	Peng Zhou	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye	Tanisha Tate	Aye
Joanna Steffey	Aye	Paula Hudson	Aye		
Stephanie Oliver	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye		
Sue Rushfirth	Aye	Yana Bloomstein	Aye		

Public Comments

Kay Bell (COD) thanked Nuha for her opening remarks at meetings, noting that other boards have adopted similar remarks at the beginning of the meeting.

Select Board update from Jen Roberts on extension and funding request.

- The board approved the Commission's extension to November 30 and included it in the mission statement. In September the board will revisit the extension of the commission from November 30 until a date to be determined.
- The board added an advisory position from the COD.
- Funding was not included in the annual budget. It may be discussed as part of the ARPA funding. Half of the 5.8K has been accounted for so there are still funds available in this disbursement and there will be additional funds coming this summer. The deadline for spending the ARPA funds is "pretty far out" according to Select Board Chair Roberts. The Select Board will schedule listening sessions for the ARPA funds. She will keep the commission updated on these.
- Our proposal for funding should identify specific projects. Please send suggestions and questions about this to Nuha and Nalini.

Land Acknowledgment

Yana Bloomstein read the land acknowledgment. She shared some of the speech by Kisha James, granddaughter of Wamasutta, Frank James, from the November, 2021 National Day of Mourning event held annually in Plymouth. In 1970 Frank James went to Coles Hill to deliver a speech drafted for the 350th anniversary celebration of the Pilgrims' arrival. State officials had rejected [his speech](#) for a formal event in Boston as "inflammatory."

Confirming subcommittee membership

Budget: Stephanie Oliver

Lived Experience, Storytelling: Nuha Muntasser, Stephanie Oliver, Katina Fontes, Peng Zhou, Yana Bloomstein, Janine Taylor

- There was a question about the size of the subcommittees as a quorum of the entire commission. Can some commission members attend these meetings as nonmembers of the subcommittee. The question will be researched.
- There was a short discussion about the Commission voting (choosing) the subcommittee chair. It was decided this would be left to each subcommittee. The motion was revised to say as much.

Motion by Nuha and seconded by Joanna: Move to approve the Budget subcommittee and the Lived Experience subcommittee.

Vote taken to call the meeting to order:

Nalini Luthra	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye	Peng Zhou	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye	Tanisha Tate	Aye
Joanna Steffey	Aye	Paula Hudson	Aye		
Stephanie Oliver	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye		
Sue Rushfirth	Aye	Yana Bloomstein	Aye		

Outreach Subcommittee: Nalini Luthra, Yana Bloomstein, Katina Fontes, Nuh Muntasser, Sue Rushfirth, Sue Abrams

Motion by Nuha and seconded by Sue R: Move to approve the Outreach subcommittee and the Lived Experience subcommittee.

Before the vote was taken a question arose about why Nuha and Nalini are on all subcommittees. This raises the question of a quorum at all subcommittee meetings and generated a discussion about the independence of the subcommittees in discussion and decision making and how this is impacted by the size of the subcommittee. It was suggested that smaller subcommittees allow more voices to be heard and creates a comfort level for the members.

- Nuha explained that Mark Thompson wants to limit the number of people who have the password to start a meeting. He proposed that the co-chair could start the meeting and then hand it off to the subcommittee chair. There has been some confusion about this, with different people starting subcommittee meetings.
- A comment in the chat noted that the COD has subcommittees and have been able to work well with them without problems.
- With several comments in the chat, it was noted that this is not an appropriate way to have a discussion with the public.
- There was a question about staff making policy for who can run municipal committee meetings.
- Nuha will ask Mark and Henry for their opinion on whether this limit is necessary and how to move forward with subcommittee meetings.

Due to the discussion, there were no other votes on subcommittees.

Administrative updates

- Communication between meetings

There was a concern expressed that there is little communication between meetings. Nuha reminded the committee about the previous decision to send regular updates to the Commission co-chairs before each meeting. She encouraged people to submit a summary (not minutes) of meetings.

- There was also discussion that summaries be concise, proof-read and share a uniform format prior to submission to the co-chairs. The co-chairs noted they were spending an inordinate amount of time editing and formatting summaries and minutes. It was suggested that moving forward, if meeting notes/summaries were not submitted appropriately, they will be sent back for correction.

There was a question about whether subcommittee minutes need to be submitted to the Commission and included in the packet. It appears that it may not be necessary.

Subcommittee and Working Groups Updates

Budget Committee: Stephanie reported some details of the contract with Nichole Argo were still being worked out in January, which resulted in a delay in scheduling the second meeting of the Lived Experiences sub-committee, but the contract was finalized and the subcommittee is moving forward.

Lived Experience Committee: The committee is waiting for the contract details to be settled and then they will meet. A question/suggestion was raised about including student voices in this

project. There are resources at LS to help with this. This is also a recommendation of the Outreach Subcommittee.

Outreach: The committee is working on recommendations on how the Commission can best function in this area. One area that has been discussed is how to respond to emails that come to the Commission email. This could be just an acknowledgment of the email and an assurance that it will be discussed.

Motion by Yana and seconded by Nuha to appoint Joanna Steffey as the point person to respond to DEIC emails:

Nalini Luthra	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye	Peng Zhou	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye	Tanisha Tate	Aye
Joanna Steffey	Aye	Paula Hudson	Aye		
Stephanie Oliver	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye		
Sue Rushfirth	Aye	Yana Bloomstein	Aye		

Structure: This subcommittee is meeting on the second Thursday of the month at 7PM. They are working on recommendations for the Commission and the subcommittees keeping the original charge as the frame. One specific recommendation is to find a trainer to move that forward. Other suggestions discussed include self-identification audit for the town boards and committees. There may be interest in sharing some of the training with other boards and committees. It was suggested that we include a moment of self-reflection following our land acknowledgment given the thoughtfulness of the additional information shared at each of our meetings.

DEIC member applications

There are 2 new applications for the Commission. These residents should be encouraged to come to the meetings as attendees. As vacancies on the Commission occur these applicants will be notified. Because this is a Select Board appointment, that would be the route for responses.

Letter from Sudbury Clergy Association

Discussion:

- Changes in the signs will need to go through the state legislature so this is an issue that the Historical Commission should be involved with. We can be a participant in the conversation but that is what we can offer at this point.
- It was suggested that someone from the Outreach committee contact the Clergy Association and invite them to a future meeting.

Motion by Stephanie and seconded by Sue R. to appoint Joanna Steffey to reach out to the Historical Commission and the Clergy Association and respond as she sees fit.

Nalini Luthra	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye
Joanna Steffey	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye
Stephanie Oliver	Aye		
Sue Rushfirth	Aye		

Welcome Karyn Jones from COD and update.

The Commission welcomed Karyn. Her statement is attached below.

Review and approve minutes of January 13, 2022 meeting.

Motion by Sue R. and seconded by Nuha to accept the minutes of the January 13, 2022 meeting as presented.

Nalini Luthra	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye
Joanna Steffey	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye
Stephanie Oliver	Aye		
Sue Rushfirth	Aye		

Nuha reminded the Commission of our common purpose and the importance of working together toward that goal.

Motion by Nalini and seconded by Joanna to adjourn the meeting.

Nalini Luthra	Aye	Nuha Muntasser	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye
Joanna Steffey	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye
Stephanie Oliver	Aye		
Sue Rushfirth	Aye		

Note: Next meeting will be Thursday, March 10, 2022

Meeting adjourned at 10:21pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Abrams
Clerk

Statement from Karyn Jones as the liaison from the Commission on Disability:

The COD had a very heartfelt discussion at our meeting last Thursday.

It intersects with the work DEI is doing since it shows how there is perhaps a need of professional development on our town boards and committees concerning rights of people with disabilities, law, and how we use language around people with disabilities amongst other things.

At our last COD meeting we talked about a discussion that was had by the Permanent Building Committee on January 27 regarding Fire Station 2.

The COD has since written a letter to the Permanent Building Committee regarding language used towards people living with disabilities and the assumptions made about people living with disabilities or disabled people during that meeting. Essentially, the building designer put in four universal changing rooms equipped with universal showers. There seemed to be an assumption that someone with a disability would never be a firefighter in Sudbury and therefore the PBC decided to remove the accessible features out of the bathrooms. There was an implicit bias that only able-bodied people would

be welcome to enter all areas of the station. Fire Station 2 is also a facility that will be utilized by municipal employees of the town and therefore must adhere to Title I of the American with Disabilities Act.

(Title I needs to provide for employees or someday we could hire someone with a mobility issue. We have to have buildings and grounds.)

This was right in the minds of the COD since we just came off from advocating for universally designed changing rooms at the new Fairbank Community Center. We were incredibly pleased to see a project manager design the fire station with universally designed principals and were disappointed to see that those recommendations weren't supported.

The other item that we discussed is that we wrote an Accessibility Statement that we were hoping would be included in future building projects including the RFP princess for organizations bidding on the new Fairbanks Community Center.

The Permanent Building Committee asked for more information as they are "worried that the statement may limit otherwise qualified contractors from bidding."

That statement is concerning since it implies that it is a risk for the Permanent Building Committee to request that a builder is knowledgeable about ADA compliance is as skilled in their construction and knowledge.

We therefore sent the Permanent Building Committee a response today on why this accessibility statement is so critical in our minds especially as the transition plan from the Institute for Human Centered Design provides a very full report on where we are non-compliant in town.

I know that in your meetings you have discussed how the language we use matters and is important. It isn't okay to say to a parent who has a young person with a disability that you can go somewhere else. It is not okay to say we won't have any fire fighters who are disabled. It isn't okay to call a family bathroom a quadraplegic bathroom. Etc.

I bring this to you as our update. Feel free to ask me any questions you may have. However, I do feel this intersects in a lot of work you do.

