

Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission

Lived Experiences/Storytelling Project Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
Saturday, February 19, 2022
3:00 PM

Members Present: Stephanie Oliver, Katina Fontes, Nalini Luthra, Janine Taylor,
Yana Bloomstein

Absent: Peng Zhou, Nuha Muntasser

Others Present: Nichole Argo

1. Welcome and open meeting by roll call vote.

Stephanie Oliver opened the meeting and took the roll call.

- Roll Call: Katina Fontes: present; Janine Taylor: yes; Nalini Luthra: present; Yana Bloomstein: present; Stephanie Oliver: present.

2. Approval of minutes

Stephanie presented the draft minutes from the 1/6/22 meeting. There were a few typos mentioned.

Katina made a motion to approve the minutes with the understanding that the typos would be corrected. Nalini seconded the motion.

- Roll call vote: Katina Fontes: yes; Yana Bloomstein (abstain); Janine Taylor: yes; Nalini Luthra: yes; Stephanie Oliver: yes

3. Appointment of Sub-Committee Chair and Minutes-Taker

Stephanie asked if anyone was interested in taking the role of Sub-Committee Chair or Minutes-Taker. She pointed out that although she had taken the lead in organizing the sub-committee so far, that had come out of her Budget/Funding role and that she was very open to someone else chairing the committee, but would do it if no one else was interested.

Janine Taylor made a motion to nominate Stephanie Oliver to Chair position. Nalini Luthra seconded the motion.

- Roll Call Vote: Nalini Luthra: yes; Janine Taylor: yes; Yana Bloomstein: yes; Katina Fontes: yes

The committee decided to rotate note-taking responsibility. Katina offered to take notes for this meeting.

4. Survey

Scope

The Committee discussed the scope of the survey with regard to several areas:

- a. focus...race, nationality, gender, disability etc.
- b. Recipient and witness stories
- c. Population to submit stories (i.e. residents, visitors, employees, students)
- d. Time frame (i.e. how far back for the stories)

Nichole pointed out that the more limited we are in terms of the types of stories we accept, the fewer responses we will get. Yana asked whether the targeting of groups could be done in phases, and Janine asked about the possibility of collecting people's own stories first, then witness stories. Nichole said that there could be pros and cons to that approach. Nalini mentioned that we need to consider alternative story collection methods, particularly for those for whom English is not their first language. Katina pointed out that the data could be disaggregated to identify the types of stories (resident, witness, etc.) and said that targeting of different groups could happen through marketing, rather than limited story collection to certain groups.

There was significant discussion on the subject of including children and youth in the survey. Nichole suggested that it might be helpful to provide our survey to the schools and let them take it on for their students because children/youth under age 18 would need parental consent to participate in the survey, though parents could certainly tell stories on behalf of their children. Katina also raised concerns about complications that might arise from including minors. Rules about Human Subjects research conducted by an outside group make data collection more difficult than data collected by the schools directly. It was mentioned that there should be a conversation with the schools no matter which approach was selected. Nichole also noted that the data collected would be useful to share as part of a wider conversation with the school community. Janine volunteered to reach out to school administrators.

As for the other scope considerations, Katina advocated for being as expansive as possible. The committee agreed that the survey should not focus on a particular identity like race, and that stories could come from people who live, work, go to school in or travel through Sudbury (as long as the event itself happened in Sudbury). In terms of a time constraint, Nichole said that the Needham project did not put a time limit on stories, but that most of the stories came from the last 5 years or so. Nalini suggested that we not limit the timeframe but that we collect data on when the story occurred, and the committee agreed with that approach.

Draft Survey

The committee reviewed the draft survey created by Nichole (based on the Needham survey). There was discussion about what the goals of the survey should be and how to communicate that. There were questions about whether the introduction to the survey was too wordy, and whether people would read it. Nichole said that not everyone would read it all, but that she thought it was important to have the information there. Katina suggested that maybe some of the background information could be put into a drop-down menu/area that people could click on to read more. Janine asked whether the survey would only seek negative stories. Katina responded that a similar survey in Shrewsbury was open to all types of stories. Janine commented that she liked the idea of including positive stories, but that we would need to be intentional about communicating that. Nichole pointed out that some positive stories would likely come out even if we frame the survey as is (such as through upstanders). The committee decided to keep the survey open to all types of stories.

There was discussion about what to say about the survey's goals in the introduction. Janine suggested that we say something about identifying issues so that we can resolve them/put interventions in place and become the kind of community where everybody, regardless of how they identify, has that sense of being included and belonging.

It was agreed that everyone would review the survey and send comments and edits to Katina by March 2nd so she could create an edited document for committee review at the next subcommittee meeting.

5. Community Outreach

Yana offered to be the Community Outreach Lead, but said she would like a partner. Janine offered to partner with Yana. As a member of the DEI Commission's Outreach Working Group, Yana said she already has a list of community contacts that she would send out. Stephanie noted that eventually all members of the SDEIC would need to be involved in outreach. Katina noted that realistically, the survey would not be ready to go live until April 1st and that one benefit would be soliciting responses at Town Meeting in May. The committee agreed to review that list and then complete the Community Mapping exercise individually before the next meeting. There was some discussion on the timing of outreach (starting before or after the survey is live). Nichole said that with the Needham project, they had everything ready to go and started outreach with a live link (beginning with a press release).

6. Website

Nichole said she would provide job descriptions for the website developer and intern roles so that we could begin outreach. Nalini suggested that the website could potentially be developed by a high school student as a community service project. Nichole noted that the intern's job would mainly involve cleaning up stories to remove identifying information. She also suggested also posting at local colleges for both positions. Katina suggested that HireCulture.org would be a good place to post the intern position. There was a brief discussion about using Google Sites vs. Qualtrics for the survey.

7. Public Comments

Lisa Kouchakdjian suggested that the sub-committee connect with Karyn Jones, liaison for the Commission on Disability regarding survey accessibility. Nalini suggested that Karyn email Stephanie as the sub-committee chair.

8. Next Steps

The committee agreed to meet every 2 weeks for now, with the next meeting on Saturday, March 5 at 3:00 pm. Stephanie said she would send a Doodle Poll to identify future meeting dates.

9. Adjournment

Nalini made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Janine Taylor seconded the motion.

- Roll call vote: Nalini Luthra: yes; Yana Bloomstein: yes; Katina Fontes: yes; Janine Taylor: yes; Stephanie Oliver: yes

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.