

**DEI Commission Meeting
April 14, 2022
Meeting held via Zoom**

Agenda

1. Welcome and open meeting by roll call vote.
2. Land acknowledgement and moment of reflection (Nalini Luthra)
3. Public comments.
4. Subcommittee working group updates and survey results discussion.
5. Select Board: Quarterly Report discussion and vote
6. ARPA Listening Session update.
7. Karyn Jones / COD update.
8. Review and approve minutes of March 10, 2022 meeting.
9. Adjourn meeting by roll call vote.

Present:

Sue Rushfirth	Janine Taylor	Peng Zhou
Katina Fontes	Sue Abrams	Yana Bloomstein
Stephanie Oliver (arrived 7:37)	Peju Champion	
Nalini Luthra	Joanna Steffey	

Absent: Tanisha Tate, Paula Hudson, Nuha Montasser

Also present:

Sudbury TV, Kay Bell (COD)

Call to order

Co-Chair Luthra, following acknowledgement of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 7:34PM.

Vote taken to call the meeting to order:

Sue Rushfirth	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye	Peng Zhou	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye		
Peju Champion	Aye	Yana Bloomstein	Aye		
Nalini Luthra	Aye	Joanna Steffey	Aye		

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Land acknowledgment

Nalini Luthra read the land acknowledgement and shared a poem by Saanvi Sharma the first Poet Laureate of India, recognizing the many spring cultural and religious holidays.

Subcommittee Working Groups

Note: Summaries of recent meetings are attached below

Commission Survey

As of June 1, 2022, is it your intention to continue to serve the Sudbury DEI Commission?

3 No

b. 5 Yes

c. 4 Undecided

- According to the survey, reasons for members choosing to leave after the initial appointment included: burnout, time constraints, community issues, the challenge to engage in the meeting, lack of progress.
- Since the Select Board had approved an extension of the initial appointments until November, the question of using the June date was raised.
- There was also a question as to whether a Commission member who chose to leave, could continue to work with the subcommittees as a non-voting member. Nalini will research this and let the group know what she finds out.
- Vona Hill has resigned unexpectedly. Her work on the commission was acknowledged and appreciated.

Outreach

- Katina has submitted a press release to the Town Crier but it has not been published as of this meeting.
- The committee will reach out to other town boards and committees prior to the self identification survey in an effort to set up a system to create a connection between the boards and committees and the commission.
- Facebook is growing slowly. Highlighting individual commission members was an idea put forward to grow the page.
- Joanna has met with the Historical Commission and encouraged future collaboration.
 - She created a powerpoint about the commission. She emailed it to the commission in case anyone else would like to use it.
 - She inquired about the historical markers and the discussion circled back to the clergy association and their interest in getting several groups together to start the conversation. Note: changing the markers is complicated and requires state legislative involvement.
- It was noted that the Lived Experience project will provide additional opportunities for outreach.

Lived Experience

- The committee is close to the final draft of the survey and hope for an end of April launch.
- The website is the next step...this has presented funding challenges.
- A comprehensive list of individuals and groups to contact is important. If each commission member takes the responsibility of reaching out to groups they know, this will expand our capacity.
- There is a potential to share our project with other towns, as Wayland has done with us.

Structure

- The committee is working with Katina around the self-identification survey.
- Some kind of endorsement of support for the commission's work from the Select Board is important.
- The subcommittees' work seems to be overlapping in a positive way.

Training Subcommittee

- This new committee will put together the ideas from the commission members and move forward on identifying consultants and/or trainers for our needs.

Quarterly Report

The draft was reviewed, and edits made. The current draft is attached below.

- Facebook:
 - Joanna will rewrite the Facebook information. It was suggested that we use Facebook as a vehicle for the survey. She encouraged people to post and share events, as that drives up traffic to our page.
- Budget:
 - There was a discussion regarding identifying specific costs to present as a budget, as the Select Board wants a line-item budget request.

- The Lived Experience project will need additional funds beyond the \$5,000 grant.
- Sudbury Foundation has a July deadline for Racial Equity grants. We could submit another grant to help cover those costs. It could also be a source for training funds.
- We need training options and costs as placeholders. We can make specific decisions on training models, but we need to provide the details for the budget.
 - Janine tried to contact Raul Fernandez regarding his availability (he ran the MAGIC workshop that has been briefly discussed at previous meetings.)
 - All ideas for training should be directed to the Training Subcommittee. It was noted that there is a distinction between training for the members, and consulting to provide direction for the commission's work.
 - Nalini will reach out to get some estimated costs to be included in the quarterly report.
- Another budget item suggested by Nalini was funding for a speaker such as Jennifer Deleon.
- IINE (International Institute of New England) has sponsored Suitcase Stories, presentations of personal immigration stories.
- ARPA funds were discussed during this time.
 - Funds will not be disbursed until July so that may not be useful for the Lived Experience funding, although there will be funding needs coming up later for which that funding would be applicable.
 - Stephanie is working with Henry on the Lived Experience issues.

A motion to accept the quarterly report pending input from the budget subcommittee, training subcommittee and media numbers was made by Sue Abrams and seconded by Katina Fontes.

Sue Rushfirth	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye	Peng Zhou	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye		
Peju Champion	Aye	Yana Bloomstein	Aye		
Nalini Luthra	Aye	Joanna Steffey	Aye		

Commission on Disability Report

Kay Bell reported for Karyn Jones. The COD is researching models of surveys that are accessible to all. For low vision people the screens need to be modified. This is a goal of the Lived Experience project. The COD did a beta on a low vision model and found it to be accessible. They are working on internet access. The COD also approached the library, and the library staff are addressing the outdated technology.

Minutes of the March 3, 2022 DEI Meeting

A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Sue Rushfirth and seconded by Katina Fontes.

Sue Rushfirth	Aye	Janine Taylor	Aye
Katina Fontes	Aye	Sue Abrams	Aye
Peju Champion	Aye	Peng Zhou	Aye
Nalini Luthra	Aye	Joanna Steffey	Aye

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Abrams
Clerk

Subcommittee Reports

The Outreach Subcommittee

Katina Fontes

The Outreach Subcommittee met for the first time on March 22nd (we will be meeting again this coming Tuesday, April 12th). Katina Fontes was selected as the sub-committee chair.

The following topics were discussed:

- Joanna Steffey gave a short report on the Historical Commission meeting on March 15th, which she attended.
- Outreach to other town boards and how to go about building relationships with the members. All agreed that this step was important for participation in a future survey or self-assessment.
- The SDEIC Facebook page and how to grow membership.

As a follow-up to the meeting, a press release about the SDEIC was sent to the Sudbury Town Crier on March 23rd. It has not been published yet.

The Lived Experiences Project Sub-Committee

Stephanie Oliver

The Lived Experiences Project Sub-Committee met on 3/20/22 and 4/10/22. At our 4/10 meeting, we were fortunate to be joined by Terrie Livingston of the Wayland Lived Experiences project. Terrie provided great insight and helpful ideas for us to consider. We are close to finalizing our survey and plan to send out a test survey to the full Commission so that all Commission members have the opportunity to see it before it goes live. We invite Commission members to contact Stephanie Oliver or Katina Fontes if they identify any significant issues with the survey that should be addressed. We have discussed at length the pros and cons of utilizing Town resources to host the Lived Experiences website (on which we plan to post the survey and share results) and have decided to create our own website to better control access to the survey data and ensure anonymity of survey participants. We plan to launch the survey by the end of April in order to make sure it is live by Town Meeting. Getting as many survey responses/stories as possible will really help to provide meaningful data for our work., so we will need all Commission members to assist in promoting the survey. We plan to send a list of community groups to the full Commission and hope to identify a Commission member contact person for each group. Community outreach is critical to making this project a success. We have tentatively scheduled our next sub-committee meeting for 4/18/22 at 7 pm.

DEI Structure Subcommittee Update

Sue Rushfirth

The subcommittee met on April 8.

1. The main agenda item was a discussion of the town boards and committees self-identification survey.

- The primary purpose of this effort is to assist with providing transparency to our community about who our representatives are.
- Anonymous completion of questions aimed at self identification of age, national origin, ancestry, gender identity, educational attainment, income bracket, religious affiliation and disability status. This is pending legal counsel on assurance that no questions violate any laws.
- Other uses for the survey:
 - To introduce the DEI Commission to the other town boards and committees
 - To potentially collect some preliminary data on what DEI policies the other town boards and committees may already have in process
 - To assess whether other town boards and committees may wish to gain more practical knowledge of DEI through connection with our Commission or joint DEI training efforts

2. The future of the Structure Subcommittee

The consensus was that the subcommittee should remain intact until after the commission has regrouped and the membership has stabilized for the next year.

DEI Commission Quarterly Report to the Select Board April, 2021

TOWN OF SUDBURY SUDBURY DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

Mission:

The Select Board is creating the Sudbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission to support diversity, achieve equity, and foster inclusion for every member of this community, respecting all aspects of identities. The Commission shall also critically consider intersections among these groups to facilitate learning, understanding, and unity.

The Commission shall consist of up to thirteen members and Advisory members. The Commission shall make recommendations on a quarterly (minimum) basis to the Sudbury Select Board on policies and programs to identify and eliminate conscious or unconscious biases and prejudices, to reject discrimination, and to measure, promote, and increase diversity, equity, and inclusion of Sudbury's historically disenfranchised populations. Within the first year, the commission will present an action plan to move the town toward the following goals.

Goals:

1. The Commission will meet at least monthly to hear testimony from towns people, deliberate on those discussions and submit a report within the first year, including an action plan, to the Select Board which will then oversee the implementation of the recommended actions. To accomplish this goal, the Commission will:
 1. Provide training for the members to self-examine and recognize their own experience with historically disenfranchised populations and unconscious bias.
 2. Gather first-hand experiences in Sudbury from historically disenfranchised populations.
 3. Solicit feedback from town departments, boards, and committees.
 4. Collaborate with groups operating in town that are focused on related issues.
 5. Facilitate discussions and education forums for town residents about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
2. The Commission will identify ways to promote awareness, engagement, and community building around diverse experiences and to create a more inclusive community, including:
 - a. Brainstorm possible actions that can be taken to address any problems/issues found.
 - b. Leverage final report as presented to the Select Board documenting the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion in town to make appropriate recommendations and address any problems found.
3. The Select Board, in partnership with the Commission, to present findings to the town.

Work to date:

Social Media: The Facebook page is up. It states:

This page states the mission of the commission and reminds the community it serves to provide information to the community regarding the Sudbury DEIC. The mission of the Sudbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission is to support diversity, achieve equity, and foster inclusion for every member of this community, respecting all aspects of identities. The Commission shall also critically consider intersections among these groups to facilitate learning, understanding, and unity.

To date the page has over 100 followers and has provided information on a variety of events that are consistent with our mission.

Land Acknowledgment: A Land Acknowledgment is repeated at each meeting. Feedback from other committees has been positive and the Commission encourages the Select Board and other boards and Committees to begin their meetings with an acknowledgment.

Subcommittees: In an effort to maximize productivity, the Commission created several subcommittees to work on various aspects of the mission. Instead of trying to include discussions of all the work in the monthly meeting agendas, subcommittees will bring decisions to the Commission to be considered and voted on. The subcommittees created to date:

- Structure Subcommittee

The committee provided an organizational chart for the Commission (see attached) and has been helping to define the role of each subcommittee. It is also moving forward in developing a self-identification survey for town boards and committees. This information will provide a picture of who is represented in decision making for the town and will also make recommendations around making participation in these boards and committees, including how to be appointed, more transparent.

- Lived Experience Subcommittee

This subcommittee has received a grant from the Sudbury Foundation to complete a project that will survey the town and solicit stories and experiences related to diversity, equity and inclusion from residents. Working with Dr. Nichole Argo PhD, who helped develop a similar project in Needham, the committee is hoping to launch the survey by late spring. The committee developed a community mapping document and is working to complete the survey. Future plans could include a community event to share and discuss the results of the survey and, perhaps, some storytelling.

- Budget Subcommittee

The work of this small subcommittee to date has been primarily identifying funding for the Lived Experience project.

- Outreach Subcommittee

This group focuses on outreach to the community and other groups, social media and public relations.

There has been outreach to the Historical Commission and the Clergy Association, in addition to maintaining the Facebook page. A press release has been sent to local media.

- Training Subcommittee

This is a newly formed committee charged with researching training opportunities for Commission around diversity as well as articulating the future work of the Commission.

Commission Membership: Karyn Jones joined the Commission as the Commission on Disability Liaison. One member, Vona Hill, has resigned. A survey of the commission members showed 3 members planning to finish their term in June, 5 staying on until November, and 4 undecided.

Funding: The Commission's request for a budget of \$15,000 to cover training costs and other expenses, was not included in the FY '23 budget. At the listening session for ARPA funds the Commission spoke to this need and requested the funds from the source.

Commission Terms: There was extended discussion about this and a survey has been sent to all members to determine their intentions to stay on the Commission, go off in June or go off in November.

Moving Forward:

1. We are moving ahead on finding appropriate training (Goal 1.1)
2. The Lived Experience project will provide primary source information on identity based experiences from people who live, work, go to school, and spend time in Sudbury. (Goal 1.2)
3. A self-identification survey of town boards and committees will provide important data around diversity in positions of power in the town. (Goal 1.3)
4. Our outreach work includes connecting with organizations in town that are focused on these issues, as well as groups that represent particular demographics. (Goal 1.4)
5. We are examining possible programs that would support our mission and goals. (Goal 1.5)

