



Meeting Notice

Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission

Sudbury DEI Commission Meeting

Thursday, July 14, 2022

7:30 PM Open Session

Please click the link below to join the virtual Sudbury DEI Commission Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83513599960>

For audio only, call the number below and enter the meeting ID on your telephone keypad.

Dial -in: 978-639-3366 or 470-250-9358

Meeting ID: 835 1359 9960

Meeting Agenda

1. 7:30 PM: Welcome and open meeting by roll call vote.
2. 7:35 PM: New Secretary - VOTE.
3. 7:45 PM: Land Acknowledgement and moment of reflection.
4. 7:55 PM: National Disability Independence Day acknowledgement - Karyn Vostok.
5. 8:00 PM: Public comments.
6. 8:15 PM: August meeting - VOTE.
7. 8:20 PM: Subcommittee updates.
8. 8:45 PM: SB emergency meeting & response to zoombomb incident debrief.
9. 9:00 PM: SB meeting extension of DEI Commission debrief.
10. 9:05 PM: Membership, vacancies, and volunteer opportunities.
11. 9:15 PM: Town events and national holidays planning - VOTE.
12. 9:20 PM: Scott Smigler's COD concern.
13. 9:27 PM: Review and approve minutes of June 9, 2022 meeting.
14. 9:30 PM: Adjourn meeting by roll call vote.

*"This listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the Co-Chairs which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law."
The next Sudbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission meeting will be determined on July 14th, 2022.*

Lived Experiences Project Update

The Lived Experiences Project continues to collect stories via our online survey (or via alternate method upon request). Although we initially planned on a 6/30 deadline for responses, the sub-committee has decided to extend the deadline to 8/31/22. We hope that will allow for more stories to be collected. As of 7/9/22, 22 stories had been received. The sub-committee met on 7/9/22 and discussed outreach strategies. We plan to do another big outreach push now that the deadline has been extended, and hope that each DEIC member will partner with us to both spread the word and share their own experiences. We are also planning to work with an intern on data clean-up and reporting.

Scott Smigler's Email Regarding COD Concern

Dear Members of the DEI Commission,

I have watched many of your meetings over the past year, and appreciate your time and thoughtfulness in creating a DEI Commission for Sudbury. Going from "zero to one" isn't easy, and I applaud you for taking on this challenge.

I am writing to you today regarding my concern with the Commission on Disability's process for recommending appointments to its open seats. My understanding is that they received many more applications than there are open seats, and that they took part in an exercise to rank candidates based on desirability for appointment. The Town Manager will be responsible for reviewing their feedback and making a final decision shortly.

This is an uncomfortable message for me to send because I sense I am sticking my nose into a long-term dispute between two outspoken centers of influence within our community. I admire people on both sides of this apparent dispute because I believe they have done a lot of good for our community. However, the discourse seems to be devolving at an accelerating pace, as was evident throughout multiple recent meetings of the Commission on Disability, and I am concerned it will have a chilling effect on community participation in our local boards and commissions.

To the extent you agree that there is a straight line between situations like this, which may discourage people from volunteering their unique voices to local commissions and boards, and your mission to "support diversity, achieve equity, and foster inclusion for every member of this community..." I hope you will consider whether it is appropriate for your commission to engage on some level.

For example, you may recommend training to committees and boards to ensure fair, inclusive, transparent, and objective appointment processes, along with developing new strategies for diversifying applicant pools. You may also recommend that committees and boards formalize training and onboarding procedures for new members to encourage people who do not have prior committee experience to apply. In addition, if your reaction to the recent situation I observed impacts you the way it did me, you may consider asking the Town Manager to pause before deciding on this particular appointment, and discard any recommendations they've received.

Here's a brief overview of the recent situation I observed. There are three sides to every story and I don't pretend to know any of them, I only know what I see. I'd encourage the DEI Commission to view these events from the perspective of a person who may be thinking of volunteering for their first committee appointment -- would this feel welcoming?

1. On June 13, 2022, the Commission on Disability discussed a rubric they had developed to "rank" applicants to their open seat. If you do not have time to watch the full meeting, please scroll to 1:12:00 and watch from there.

<https://sudbury.vod.castus.tv/vod/?video=d2517deb-f50d-47c3-b297-45b515ee1493&nav=recent>

It was hard for me to watch this because it felt like the rubric was being designed with the explicit intent of excluding a single person, while demeaning that person and framing them in the worst way possible. While it may be true that person, Ms. Nam, has been outspoken on a variety of issues in our Town over the years, some of which I have disagreed with, I have always found Ms. Nam to be constructive and collaborative in my personal interactions with her, including committee work. In fact, she was unanimously elected to be Co-Chair of Sudbury's Finance Committee last year, winning support from people who have also disagreed with her at times, because of her truly exceptional contributions.

2. On June 29, 2022, the Commission on Disability met to rank candidates following their interviews at prior meetings. While at least 2 letters were sent to the Commission on Disability regarding Ms. Nam's application, one of which was supportive, and one of which was critical, I believe from my reading of these materials that only the critical letter was initially included in the meeting materials. The supportive letter was only included after a follow-up request was sent.

https://cdn.sudbury.ma.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2022/06/CommissionOnDisability_2022_Jun_29_supporting_materials_2.pdf?version=221bac3701514499e223e9ff363122e2

3. Ultimately, I believe Ms. Nam was ranked #4 of all applicants. I found this shocking, given my first hand knowledge of Ms. Nam's contribution to the rebuilding of playgrounds in our community to make them accessible for EVERY child (which she described during her

interview), first when I was a member of the Community Preservation Committee which provided significant funding, and then as a member of the Finance Committee which supported further iterations of the project.

How could this have been a fair and objective process? There was no greater advocate for accessible playgrounds in Sudbury than Ms. Nam; she drove the project in partnership with School Staff, Town Staff, and concerned parents for five years, including planning, securing funding from the Town and via grants, design, and implementation. This experience strikes me as being highly relevant to the Commission on Disability.

I again acknowledge there are many sides to every story. However no person should feel that they have or will be denied a fair and impartial hearing when seeking an opportunity to serve our community.

With respect,
Scott Smigler
Plympton Road