

Date: 8th January, 2026.

Attendees (Virtual Meeting): Janine Taylor, Thomas Plihczik, Safa Khan, Isaac Tesfay, Joanna Steffey, Nnenna Uneke, Kimberly Lezak, Radha Raman Gargeya (*Sudbury Select Board Liaison*), James Goudie-Murray (*Town of Sudbury Staff Liaison*)

Agenda Items:

Welcome and Opening of Meeting

Following Roll Call, Janine Taylor delivered the Land Acknowledgement Statement. The Commission conducted introductions, formally welcoming new member Kimberly Lezak and Staff Liaison James Goudie-Murray.

Public Comments: None today

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes: None today

Collaboration with LSRHS and SPS:

Congratulatory Correspondence to Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (LSRHS):

Following the December authorization to draft a letter recognizing the inclusion of Eid, Diwali, and Lunar New Year in the upcoming academic calendar by LS; Isaac presented an initial draft. After incorporating minor feedback from the Commission, it was moved and approved to authorize Isaac and Nnenna to finalize the letter. The correspondence will be addressed to the LSRHS School Committee Chair, Committee members, and Superintendent Dr. Stephens, and sent on behalf of the SDEIC.

SPS Collaboration and Role Definitions:

The Commission also addressed questions raised by Sudbury Public Schools.

Joanna Steffey informed the Commission members that Goal B of the DEI Charge in the Mission Statement was specifically to gather first-hand experience especially as the Commission was working at the time on a lived-experiences project.

Joanna clarified that although the Commission cannot formally resolve complaints, it functions as a platform for residents to share their stories and provides a path for alerting the proper authorities when required.

The group discussed the roles of advisory and liaison members, with Joanna explaining that advisory members would participate in meetings while liaisons would connect with the town officials offline. Janine and Thomas clarified that the DEI Commission's goal was to establish a partnership with SPS, with a liaison role ensuring a point of contact for communication and addressing concerns.

Request for Quarterly update to Select Board (SB)

DEI Commission invited to join SB 1/20/26:

The group expressed surprise at receiving a request to attend a joint meeting with the Select Board meeting on January 20th, as they had not received feedback on their previous recommendations, and discussed the need for a clearer process for reporting and receiving feedback from the Select Board.

The DEI Commission discussed their upcoming quarterly update to the Select Board and annual report requirements. Radha Gargeya clarified that quarterly updates are informal check-ins, while annual reports are formal written documents due by January 31st.

The Commission agreed to update their September report to include recent activities and submit it as their annual report. The Commission authorized Janine Taylor to revise the report and present a quarterly update at the Select Board meeting on January 20th.

Update on Joint Event with neighboring Human Rights and DEICs (led by Newton)

The Commission also reviewed plans for an upcoming workshop on "Building Connections, Effective Tools for Community Conversations" in March, which will include 25 participants each from every partnering town/city.

The group discussed inviting representatives to two training sessions (*March 1st and March 8th*), aiming for 25 participants. They decided to prioritize town leadership, School Administration, Police Chief Nix, the Select board, James Goudie/ Andy Sheehan, Chairs of the School Committees as well as representatives from Sudbury Pride, the Goodnow Library and the Council of Clergy.

They agreed to offer one seat to the town's social workers and one to a representative from the ***Sudbury for Racial and Social Justice*** group. The Commission on Disabilities (COD), former commission members and town staff members are also being considered to extend the invitation for the Community Conversations sessions.

DEI Essay Competition Planning

The DEI Commission discussed plans for an essay competition open to high school students in Sudbury and potentially Lincoln, with a proposed prize structure of \$500 for first place, \$300 for second, and \$100 for third.

The Commission discussed the idea of the winning essay being read at the upcoming Juneteenth Celebration at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School.

James agreed to confirm with the town whether the ARPA funds available to us could be used for prizes; prompting the commission to explore alternative funding sources.

The commission agreed to present a quarterly update at a joint meeting on the 20th at 7:30 PM, where they will also seek permission to use DEI funds for the competition and request feedback on their September report and recommendations.

Meeting close

At approximately 9:47 pm, the meeting was adjourned.