



41 West Street, Cromwell CT 06416
860-632-3448

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Special Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 7, 2021 **Time:** 5:30PM
VIA ZOOM

In Attendance: Kate Puorro, Carol Perry, Jennifer Beck, Whitney Simmons, Alice Henley, Clare Serrantino, Aigné Goldsby, Bob Vanderzee, Sue Vanderzee

Also Present: Ann Grasso, Keri MacLean, Graham Jarry, Andrew Kuckel, Fran DiFiore, Mark DiPaola, Rachel Eleiott, Jazzy Hampton, Bella Beverley

Town Council Liaisons Present: James Demetriades, Steve Fortenbach

1. Call to Order

5:32 PM

2. Approval of 2021 Meeting Dates

There was some discussion from members about meeting days and times. Kate suggested polling the group through a Survey Monkey quiz, which would be more time efficient and allow for members not present to provide input. Aigné made a motion to collect responses via Survey Monkey, second by Carol. Kate will present the majority results next meeting (a special meeting date will be announced) for a vote.

3. New Business

a. Mission Statement

Members discussed creating a concise, one or two sentence mission statement. A few themes/phrases reoccurred during discussion and included:

Promote justice
A more inclusive community
Education
History
Advance inclusion and equity
Learn and implement diverse practices
Plan and action
Impact
Welcoming
Safety

Aigné introduced the idea of strategic planning beyond creation of the mission statement. Members also discussed the best way to go about developing a mission statement. There was discussion about large group involvement vs. a subcommittee. There was also discussion about the best format to create the mission statement (talk it out, google docs, email). Aigné and Bob suggested that Kate to develop a few draft mission statements based on committee discussion. Kate would then contact a subcommittee to move forward with mission statement design. That mission statement would be presented to the whole committee for voting. A motion was made by Sue and seconded by Aigné to create a mission statement subcommittee comprised of Kate, Clare, Alice, Sue and Aigné.

b. Chair/Co-Chairs, Secretary

Sue volunteered a self-nomination for the Secretary role. Alice nominated Kate for Chairperson, but because Kate is the Town Liaison and not a Cromwell resident she could not accept. Upon further discussion, the group felt most comfortable notifying everyone via email about the potential positions for everyone's consideration and tabling any further discussion, nominations and votes for the next meeting. Motion made by Aigné and seconded by Sue.

4. Old Business

a. Subcommittees

Kate outlined the below Community Dialogue Organizing Teams which would be officially designated as subcommittees. In parenthesis are volunteers for each subcommittee.

- Discussion Guide Team— Using existing dialogue guides to create/edit a guide to fit the needs of the Cromwell Community. Gloria has put together a custom suggestion as well, but it's important that community members are involved as stakeholders in this process. (Keri, Enza, and Jennifer)

- Communications/Message Development—Responsible for creating messaging about Community Dialogue purpose and process to inform community stakeholders, members and potential participants. This could be combined with the recruitment group. (Sue, Clare, Whitney, Carol, Aigné)

- Recruitment of Participants— Outreach to the Cromwell Community to empower participation from all sectors. (Carol, Aigné)

- Facilitator Training Will be trained by Gloria in either 2 half day sessions or 1 full day session. *It's important to note that facilitators do not participate directly in the community dialogue circle as we all did in the practice exercise Gloria led, because facilitators mediate and do the note take during the actual community dialogues. (Aigné, Kate, Bob, Whitney, Carol, Sue, Ann)

- Logistics – Distribution of materials, Dialogues sites (if not virtual) *This may not be necessary*

- Kick-off and Action Forum Event Planners
(Clare, Whitney)

- Evaluation/documentation-development of a pre & post-test and data analysis.
(may be an opportunity for local college students)

There was also discussion about students volunteering to work on subcommittees. James clarified that there are restrictions prevent individuals under 18 years of age to be officially appointed as voting members of the committee, but they can still attend, participate, and work with the committee. Fran and Andrew explained the process of obtaining parent permission and that there are students involved with the Cromwell Schools' Equity Committee who may be strong partners in this work.

b. Recruitment

Discussion revolved around the use of social media, flyers, email blasts, presenting to other organizations in town, etc. to recruit potential new members and volunteers during the planning and working phase leading up to and including recruitment for community dialogues. Alice suggested that recruitment will be easier once a mission statement is available. Ultimately, the goal is for community dialogues to happen in-person. Ann motioned to table this until a mission statement has been created, second by Alice.

5. Open Forum

Several members shared about the impact that the January 6, 2021 Capitol violence had on them and the country as a whole. James notified the group that the Town Council was working on a statement to release to the community. Committee members urged that the statement include the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the work being done to plan and host community dialogues. James thanked members for their input and notified them that they could email him with any other thoughts and comments. Members expressed appreciation and gratitude to be working on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, especially at this time.

6. Adjourn

Motion by Whitney, second by Sue-7:06 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katelynn Puorro', with a stylized, cursive script.

Katelynn Puorro