



Cromwell Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
Regular Meeting 8-16-21 6:00pm
Town Hall Senior Dining Room

In Attendance: Alice Henley, Ann Grasso, Aigne Goldsby, Carol Perry, Elsie Newcombe, Erin Omicioli, Gail Emilsson

Liaisons: Steven Fortenbach, Katelynn Puorro

Call to order: 6:04pm Aigne

Approval of previous meeting minutes: motion Ann, second Alice, passed unanimously
Old Business

- ADA Celebration moved to spring 2022
 - Originally looking at using one of the schools and there are certain COVID precautions that they needed our agreement about in order to let us use one of their gyms. One was that we keep a roster of everyone in attendance, assign seating in case we would need to do contact tracing, and that we would be responsible for that contact tracing and notifying attendees should they need to quarantine. Everyone would also have to agree to being 6 feet apart and the committee would be responsible for clean up, but if the school felt it was insufficient, the committee would have to pay for 4 hours of custodial services and all money from grant was allocated

New Business

- Subcommittee update (messaging/recruiting community conversations)
 - Kick-off date/time vote - 9/19 or 9/26 – Ideally, this will be held outside in the afternoon for approx. 2 hours and start with storytelling event/introductions. Steve mentioned start to football season and availability of fields for home games and availability of community (ie – parents of players). Ann had the idea of a rain date in case of weather. Some ideas for a location included the Pavilion at Watrous Park, the town gym, and the riverfront area where farmer’s market is usually held. We do need to be aware of private rentals of town spaces as well. Kate to check availability of town parks and suggested we should have a special meeting once we know where space is available. There was discussion to create a kick-off flyer for

event and create a separate flyer with info about conversations. Possibly make a Facebook event? Also, an idea for a Google doc for registration and landing page with info and short video. There was an idea to include a QR code on flyers – Erin has IT support and will take this on. Discussion tabled, will hold special meeting Aug 23rd via Zoom 6pm to finalize date.

- Guide – Kate said she is about to finalize and send to committee members, will leave room for participants to take notes.
- Facilitators – Aigne, Ann, Carol in attendance tonight. Gloria is sending dates to hold facilitator training on a Saturday, is approx. 7 hours long and will be one day. Need minimum of 6 volunteers for the training.
- Timeline – facilitator training (ASAP) then kick-off event (Sept) then conversations (all of Oct)
- Conversations – will have multiple days/times of availability each week to reach as many community members. Concerns about time commitment for everyone – not weekly, maybe every other or once a month? Some flexibility with times. Taking into consideration school and other holidays. The overall goal is to have 3 groups of 10 participants and 2 facilitators to meet for 4 sessions.
- Outreach Volunteers – using talking points to bring awareness, will need volunteers to engage with different groups in the community. Will finalize volunteers at special meeting. Some ideas include:
 - Schools – Kate to go into the school to speak with unity club (COVID precautions prevent a non-employee from going to the schools, partner with Dr Macri for email blast)
 - Board of Ed – attend meetings
 - Seniors/Senior Center – direct engagement instead of online
 - Clergy – local churches and religious groups
 - Mayor/Town Council
 - Local Businesses/Chamber of Commerce –Need to reach out to chamber and those active in the business community
 - Renters/HOAs – complex meetings, sign boards
 - Human Services
 - Local Non-Profits
 - Public library
 - Town Committees
 - Local Media/Social Media
- Survey Monkey – questions for pre/post conversations – Erin is familiar with Survey Monkey, can help with creating survey. Alice suggested starting with positive feedback (Excellent-Good-Fair-Poor) for responses. The idea to have participants keep journals for reflection and include in guide was supported and Kate will

include room in the guide for this – all agreed that having a safe space to reflect and use to build conversation each week was a good idea. Participants will take satisfaction survey at end of each session and then overall survey after the final session. Include demographics – Kate wants to apply for grants with the United Way to help with further projects. Having surveys following each session will allow for continued discussion and help facilitators. Erin and Elsie to work with Kate to create survey for committee approval.

- Unity Pole – After the back and forth with town about Pride event, there is an idea to partner with LGBTQ+ committee and schools to create a unity pole next June – maybe create this on school property? That could reduce visibility for the town and would that include all members of the community? Elsie is waiting to hear back from chair of LGBTQ+ committee. Other option would be to have a banner but need to contact DOT about that. Steve mentioned maybe creating a PRIDE crosswalk at one or all of the schools and maybe town hall/library. The PRIDE crosswalk came up and having a painted crosswalk creates insurance liability, and other factors of it being on a state road or a town road, and DOT requires specific materials/measurements. Elsie asked about traffic studies to further research this. Discussion also included collaborating with Middletown for their PRIDE event. It was suggested we bring ideas to the town in February to allow enough time.

Questions for James

James not in attendance.

- Block Party – Ann spoke about the event- this Saturday, put on by Cromwell Creative District. Event has vendors, food, music and color fun run from 2-7 at Pierson Park.
- Disability Committee – are they still active and able to have a quorum? Their focus was for fundraising for recreation activities for the community. James was researching. Kate and Elsie recall James saying the committee was inactive. They'll check in about establishing contact.

Open Forum/for good of Organization

- Steve mentioned having this group be more of an umbrella/hub for other smaller committees in town – offer support, have liaisons for each committee join DEI. Work to establish flow of information with each other. Eventually have DEI be decision-making body with smaller groups as subcommittees. Would streamline bringing concerns/ideas to town council; maybe include regular reports at town meetings. Also making sure to include race, as sometimes this is not always the first thing others think of. This idea would need to be brought to every committee for feedback. Agreement to make this a long-term goal and come back to it after the first of the year.

Motion to Adjourn: 7:45 PM