

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
INTERVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – October 27, 2020**

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5:55 p.m. - Introduction to Remote Meeting

As meeting host, Diane Wackell stated that this Open Meeting of Board of Selectmen Interview Committee is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of COVID-19. In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, the Town of Northborough has been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location.

She added that all members of the Board of Selectmen Interview Committee are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. The Order allows this Committee to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. The public is encouraged to follow along using the posted agenda. Members of the public who wish to view the live stream of this meeting may do so by going to "Northborough Remote Meetings" on YouTube via the link listed on the agenda.

Lastly, ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will not feature public comment.

Ms. Wackell confirmed that the following members of the Board of Selectmen Interview Committee were remotely present and could be heard.

Selectman Leslie Rutan  
Selectman Timothy Kaelin

**ACCEPTANCE OF OCTOBER 13, 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

Selectman Kaelin moved the Sub-Committee vote to accept the minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion. The roll call vote was taken as follows:

Selectman Kaelin     "aye"  
Selectman Rutan     "aye"

**ACCEPTANCE OF OCTOBER 20, 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

Selectman Kaelin moved the Sub-Committee vote to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2020 meeting; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion. The roll call vote was taken as follows:

Selectman Kaelin     "aye"  
Selectman Rutan     "aye"

## **INTERVIEWS FOR THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

### Vikram Verma

Mr. Verma indicated that he is interested in serving on this Committee having come to the United States as a first-generation immigrant from a Country as diverse, secular and inclusive as India. He believes that he understands the sensitivity of the subject and the need for inclusion that is reflective of the Town's changing demographics. His professional background is in the medical device industry in regulatory affairs that connects companies to the FDA and other country regulators.

He added that he knows many people in Northborough that are from India who bring to town diverse languages and cultures. He hopes to learn more about the diversity and different perspectives in town and to see what the community needs are in terms of diversity and inclusion. The Committee should benchmark where Northborough stands compared to other communities and plan accordingly. The Committee should also create an atmosphere where people can be comfortable to talk about their experiences and needs without judgement.

### Jennifer Graham

Ms. Graham indicated that she is a lifelong Northborough resident who wants Northborough to be a safer, more inclusive community that can give a voice to those who wish to be heard. She would bring the perspective of a member of the LGBTQ community and an advocate of racial and gender equality. She would also bring the knowledge of someone who has gone through the Northborough public school system who now has experience on the other side of the classroom as an after-school STEM teacher.

Ms. Graham would like to see this Committee survey the town to get a baseline on where it stands with diversity and inclusion and what can be done to make it better. The most effective way to do this would be through social media, engaging some interest through the Senior Center and communicate with other towns who are doing the same thing.

She would like the Committee to be able to educate the community on all the different perspectives in races, cultures and backgrounds and to foster a safer, more supportive community for residents of color, for the LGBTQ youth and elders, and residents with mental/physical disabilities who seek change and representation for their people.

### Jocelyn Ehrhardt

Ms. Ehrhardt indicated that she is a twenty-year resident of Northborough. She works at the Northborough Senior Center as an Outreach Worker. She has a Masters in Social Work, an area of study that includes matters of diversity, inclusion and related issues. Through various experiences, she has had multiple opportunities to explore and address these important issues.

Ms. Ehrhardt added that she would like to see this Committee take a role in providing education on the need for diversity and inclusion in this community, which could include training for Town staff. She hopes that this Committee can hear from members of the community through several public forums to understand the needs of the community and what Town government can do to address those needs.

### Anelise Horah

Ms. Horah indicated that she is a Veterinarian with 25 years of experience as an African American woman in a profession that is over 95% white. She spent the first 12 years of her life in Europe, Africa and Asia and has experienced many different cultures. She serves on a Diversity Oversight Committee for Not One more Veterinarian, a suicide prevention group for Veterinarians with over 20,000 members.

Ms. Horah added that her hope is that this Committee will increase opportunities for people of color. Her interest in serving on this Committee stems from having two children and the need to increase sensitivity toward students of color in our school system. She would like to see that Town and School employees receive training in diversity and inclusion. She noted that through social media and by reaching out to school clubs and community groups in town, the Committee could effectively hear different perspectives on the need for diversity and inclusion in Town.

### Hamilton Soriano

Mr. Soriano indicated that he is interested in serving on this Committee as he represents a minority group himself and feels that he can add a valuable culturally based perspective. His professional background is in finances. As a current member of the Board of Library Trustees, he acts as the Treasurer and is a member of the development subcommittee.

Mr. Soriano noted that it's important that not only the members of this Committee, but that everyone, get involved in creating initiatives that will bring the community together in order to make real change in diversity and inclusion. He feels that the best way to get different perspectives is through social media, for example the Northborough group on Facebook. He is heavily involved on LinkedIn, as well. The creation of this Committee is so important in that it offers hope to the community that real change will happen.

### Cailin Heinze

Ms. Heinze indicated that social justice has been a passion of hers for many years. She is a Veterinarian by trade who now works for an organization who sends her as a visiting professor all over the Country, including the Caribbean. During her travels she has seen that the veterinarian trade is not a very diverse profession. She has been exposed to students from much more diverse backgrounds and sees the need for diversity and inclusion, especially for the younger population. With that being said along with the events of the past year, she is interested in making a difference in her community to make sure that all residents of Northborough have equal treatment and opportunities.

Ms. Heinze added that she would like to see the Committee analyze where our community stands as far as what services and programs are provided for diversity and inclusion in our town, schools and police department, adding that education is important to be able to actually make change happen. She feels that one way to reach out to the community would be through an anonymous survey, realizing that some people have difficulty talking about their experiences.

Lastly, she added that as a white woman, she is not one of the most diverse candidates and understands the need to have someone be involved with the Committee who can bring different and more diverse life experiences.

## **DELIBERATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

Selectmen Rutan acknowledged that Selectman Kaelin and herself enjoyed interviewing and hearing the experiences and credentials of the following applicants, of which any of them would be suitable to serve on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She thanked the following for their interest in serving their community:

Jean Cahill  
Valeria Schmidt  
George Brenckle  
Mary Leach  
Mariam Ibrahimi  
Michaela Annunziata  
Wenisa Tran  
Lashika Holland  
Sherry Clark  
Diedra Wrighting  
David Lorenzi  
Cormac MacManus  
Vikram Verma  
Jennifer Graham  
Jocelyn Ehrhardt  
Anelise Horah  
Hamilton Soriano  
Cailin Heinze

Selectman Rutan again thanked all of the applicants and recognized that every one of them would be an asset in one way or another to this exciting new Committee. She encouraged those that are not selected for appointment to visit the Board and Committee page on the Town website to see what other Boards and Committees have openings.

Selectman Kaelin added that he is really excited to see so many applicants who applied with the best of intentions. It is very meaningful to the community to see so many residents wanting to be engaged in making the town better for everyone. He echoed Selectman Rutan's sentiment that there are other Boards and Committees that offer the opportunity for residents to get involved and better our community in so many other ways.

Prior to making recommendations for appointment, Selectmen Rutan and Kaelin took a few moments to privately review their notes from each of the interviews. Selectman Kaelin stated that following the interview of each candidate, it was apparent that the following would be an asset to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee:

Lashika Holland  
Diedra Wrighting  
Mariam Ibrahimi  
Hamilton Soriano  
Mary Leach

Selectman Kaelin moved the Subcommittee vote to recommend Lashika Holland, Diedra Wrighting, Mariam Ibrahim, Hamilton Soriano and Mary Leach for appointment to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the November 9, 2020 Selectmen's Meeting for staggered terms; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Selectman Rutan      "aye"  
Selectman Kaelin     "aye"

**ADJOURNMENT**

Selectman Kaelin moved the Subcommittee vote to adjourn; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion. The roll call vote was taken as follows:

Selectman Rutan      "aye"  
Selectman Kaelin     "aye"

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell  
Executive Assistant to the  
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. October 27, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. October 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes
3. October 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes
4. Applications the Diversity and Inclusion Committee