

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chairman Tim Kaelin  
Asst Town Administrator Becca Meekins  
Hamilton Soriano  
Diedra Wrighting  
Virginia Simms George



**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Lauren Bailey Jones  
Mary Leach  
Mariam Ibrahim  
Shika Holland

**OPEN AND WELCOME FROM CHAIRMAN, Tim Kaelin:**

**Selectman Kaelin** welcomed the committee for a meeting of the Northborough Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting just past 7 PM.

**Ms. Meekins:** Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, orders suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law General Laws Chapter 38 Section 18 in the Governor's March 15, 2020 order, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in person attendance by members of the public will be permitted. This meeting will be streamed live but will not have an option for public participation. To view or listen only, please visit the Town of Northborough's web page which will bring you to the Town of Northborough's You Tube link.

Tim Kaelin conducted a verbal roll call of all present members. Becca Meekins followed with provisions of the open meeting law.

**Approval of May 6, 2021, Minutes:**

Motion to approve: Diedra Wrighting  
Seconded: Virginia Simms George

Roll call vote: Becca Meekins: aye; Virginia Simms-George; sustain; Hamilton Soriano; aye; Tim Kaelin: aye; Diedra Wrighting: aye; minutes are approved.

**Guest Speakers - Community Affairs Committee Members:**

Pam Markey and Suzy Cieslica were present from the Community Affairs Committee to discuss the work that their committee does. Tim explained that the Diversity and Inclusion Committee has been meeting with departments and committees over the last several months to find opportunities for partnership and ways that the Diversity and Inclusion Committee can advocate for departments and committees around diversity and inclusion efforts.

Suzy Cieslica expressed that she was excited that the Diversity and Inclusion Committee had reached out because they are looking to do different events moving forward. Tim explained that the Committee has discussed ideas for more diverse celebrations throughout the year. Suzy let the D&I members know about the various events that the Community Affairs Committee works on through the year, including Munchie Madness, the Concerts on the Common and the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Suzy mentioned that the Committee has been approached in the past about putting a Menorah up on the Common during the winter holiday time.

Virginia Simms George offered some suggestions including applying for a Cultural Council grant which the Committee has done in the past. The funding from the cultural council could be used to do events around black history month or incorporating Kwanzaa into the holiday festivities. The members brainstormed event ideas that could be included as part of next years trolley ride and tree lighting ceremony.

Diedra Wrighting asked about how the committee advertises their events and whether they have done any analysis on the demographics of the attendance at events. Suzy explained that they utilize Facebook and a website, local publications, the Senior Center, and the schools. Diedra asked whether the Committee had any resources for new people that come into town. Suzy expressed that their committee has thought before about partnering with real estate agents to provide information to new residents about how to get connected. Diedra asked about how one would become a member of the CAC. Suzy explained that it is a 9-member committee, and the Board of Selectmen are the appointing authority. She also mentioned that if folks are interested in being a part of the Committee, that residents are always welcome to come to meetings to share ideas.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Community Affairs Committee decided they will meet again in September to put together a schedule for events over the next year. Members of the D&I Committee will assist the Community Affairs Committee with ideas for events on an ongoing basis.

Suzy Cieslica and Pam Markey left the meeting at 7:38pm.

Allie Lane, Recreation Director, joined the meeting at approximately 7:40pm. Allie gave the Committee an update on her programming through the summer and how it has been working with COVID-19. The Recreation Department is holding summer programs this summer for kids in town. Tim Kaelin inquired as to whether there was anything the D&I Committee could do to support the Recreation Department. Allie mentioned that the Department is in the process of building a new accessible playground at Assabet Park. Additionally, the Recreation Department is working closely with the Senior Center to develop a fully accessible walking path around the Senior Center.

Diedra Wrighting mentioned that a couple months ago, the committee met with the YMCA and they had started programming for children to teach them about diversity, equity and inclusion. Diedra asked if Allie had heard of any programming like that. Allie explained that no, she had not heard from her colleagues about that type of programming yet. Allie mentioned that she would be open to incorporating diversity programming at camp. Diedra inquired as to whether Allie's staff has had diversity training. Allie explained that they had not had Diversity Training in the past, but she would reach out to her counterparts in other communities to see if they have incorporated any DEI Training. If she is unable to locate anything, she will reach out to the D&I Committee for assistance with developing something.

Allie Lane left the meeting at approximately 8:28pm.

**Review of Letter to the Board of Selectmen:**

Becca Meekins explained that the letter was drafted after the discussion during the last meeting regarding the Board of Selectmen's request for feedback about replacing their representative to the Committee. The D&I Committee provided feedback and finalized the letter to the Board of Selectmen.

Virginia shared that she felt like the Committee received good information tonight and opportunities for partnership emerged through tonight's meeting. Hamilton did mention that recruitment seems to be the one issue that continues to come up and felt that issue should be at the top of the recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. The Committee agreed. Diedra brought up the fact that the Committee has not yet engaged churches in town. Churches are a big place for community, and it may be a good idea to add churches to the list of folks to talk to. Virginia mentioned that the Committee should pursue a listening session for the public to speak to the Committee about DEI issues in the community. The Committee agreed to put this item on a future agenda. Tim brought up the fact that June is Pride month and asked whether the committee wanted to do anything around Pride month. The Committee suggested putting together a statement. The group is interested in doing more around Pride month in the future, but given the timing, the statement may be the only thing that is possible. The committee will pursue a calendar of events for recognition with the Community Affairs Committee for next year.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn made by Hamilton Soriano

Motion seconded by Virginia Simms George

Roll call taken as follows:

Ms. Meekins: Aye
Ms. Simms-George: Aye
Ms. Wrighting: Aye
Mr. Soriano: Aye
Mr. Kaelin: Aye

Meeting is adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

by Becca Meekins

Northborough Diversity & Inclusion Committee