

Meeting Minutes | Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (HRDEIC)

December 19, 2023, 6:00-7:30 pm

Members present: Yamini Ranjan (Chair), Karen Blumenfeld (Vice Chair, chairing meeting), Mary Ann Borkowski, Eunjee Kang, Heather Pineault, Jessica Schendel (Clerk), Kanmani Sekhar (taking notes), Yauwu Tang, John Bugbee (Assistant Town Manager)

Absent: Mei-Ling Ellerman, Carlin Gruber, Janot Mendler de Suarez, Chloe Voight

Guest: Dr. Eden-Renee Hayes

1. **Call to order:** Karen called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm and took the roll call. Heather read the land acknowledgment.

2. **Public comment:** None

3. **Presentation of community equity assessment draft RFP by Dr. Eden-Renee Hayes:** Dr. Hayes presented the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Community Equity Assessment. She explained that the Equity Assessment provides an opportunity to understand the cultural climate of the Town, and learn about identity-based opportunity gaps, to help the Town develop strategies and policies to support equity and well-being for everyone in the community. The Assessment will use targeted focus groups, survey, and other methods to gather lived experiences of people in Town in order to shed light on how policies and practices can be improved. It is hoped the RFP will be issued this week. The hired consultant will have one year to complete the Assessment.

4. **Discussion of the draft RFP with Dr. Hayes and Q&A with Dr. Hayes for members of the public:** Dr. Hayes invited questions from the committee. These included whether applicants will be asked about experience or diversity on the team. A request for more time for consideration by the committee was declined since this was a courtesy review. There were no questions or comments from the public. Dr. Hayes was thanked for her work.

5. **Review and possible vote to approve November 21 meeting minutes:** MOTION: to approve the minutes of the November meeting. Mary Ann proposed, Heather seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

6. **Updates and discussion on:**

- **SPIRIT program:** This is moving forward. Due to time constraints, no update was given for this program, scheduled for April 28, 2024.
- **Multicultural Festival, Wayland Cultural Council grant proposal:** No update was given.
- **HRDEIC and Schools:** Heather reported that the schools held student and parent meetings following the incidents related to the Israel/Gaza conflict. WaylandCAN will be holding another community conversation on January 18. Heather will share information with the schools about the HRDEIC's domestic violence training on January 7 and the SPIRIT program on April 28.
- **Sudbury Foundation Grant:** Mary Ann reported that a flyer advertising the January 7 domestic violence program sponsored by the Sudbury Foundation has been distributed and should be

shared. Further ideas for publicity included Reach Beyond Domestic Violence, hair salons, Malcolm Astley, appropriate groups at the high school, posting in public spaces such as restaurants and restrooms. Heather will pick up refreshments. WayCam will film it if they can find a volunteer who can operate the equipment.

7. Discussion and possible vote on how the HRDEIC decides whether to sponsor or co-sponsor community events: Discussion postponed until the January meeting.

8. Discussion and possible vote on whether to cosponsor the January 23, 2024 program, "Never, a Civil Rights Story, with Joel Johnson," with the Wayland Public Library: Jessica reported on the book, which she read in preparation for this discussion. MOTION: to cosponsor, with the library, the upcoming presentation by Joel Johnson, "Never, a Civil Rights Story." Jessica proposed the motion, Mary Ann seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Jessica will communicate this to Courtney Michael at the Library. It was recommended that we put a link to the flyer for this program on the HRDEIC website.

9. Discussion of when to issue statements for cultural holiday observances: Postponed until the January meeting.

10. Reflections on 2023 and Announcements:

- Yamini announced that because of her family and work commitments, she is resigning from her position as Chair and as a member of the HRDEI Committee effective December 31. She will hand over the Facebook page once a replacement is found. Yamini was complimented on all that she has done for the Committee and for the Town, both in her leadership role and as a committee member. She was thanked for all her hard work and unfailing positive attitude.
- Yamini announced that the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist communities are circulating a petition calling for the schools to stop using the term "swastika" when referencing the Nazi symbol of hate. The Swastika is an ancient sacred symbol used by followers of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and other traditions worldwide, and its use as a term of hate leads to misunderstandings and risks for those who use the Swastika as a sacred symbol.

11. Topics not anticipated 48 hours in advance: None

12. Adjourn: MOTION: to adjourn the meeting, proposed by Heather, seconded by Mary Ann and passed unanimously.

Next meeting: January 16, 2024 at 6:00pm.