

Town of Boxborough
Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
Conducted on Zoom
February 24th, 2021

PRESENT: Wes Fowlks, Member; John Fallon, Member; Peishan Bartley, Member; Lovingsky Jasmin, Chair; Nora Michnovez, Member; Lakshmi Kaja, Member; Amy Osenar, Member

ALSO PRESENT: Simon Corson

ABSENT: Song Issah, Member; Olivia Jones, Member; Mary Sullivan, Member;

At 7:03 PM, Jasmin called the meeting to order.

Agenda

- Review and accept minutes of February 1st, 2020
- Invitation to provide a letter of support to the library.
- Statement to encourage people to invite the DEIC to celebrate diversity in Boxborough
- Anti-racism pledge
- 40B threshold/affordable housing
- Reach out to the community members to find out what issues they want the DEI Committee to address?
- Survey from different DEI Committees
- Other business
- Set the next meeting agenda

Jasmin notified the committee that the DEIC's warrant article was approved to be in town warrant.

At 7:05, Fallon moved to approve the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee's minutes from February 1, 2021. Seconded by Jasmin.

Roll call vote: Fallon – Aye, Bartley – Aye, Jasmin – Aye, Michnovez – Aye, Kaja – Aye, Fowlks -- Aye, Approved 6-0

Bartley updated the Libraries Transforming Communities program, and requested a letter of support for the Sargent Memorial's grant application. She opened up the workshop to DEIC members, as the number of allowed participants surpasses the number of Sargent Memorial employees participating.

The committee agreed on the importance of writing a letter of support for the library.

At 7:13, Fowlks moved to approve Bartley to write a letter of support for the Sargent Memorial Library's grant application. Seconded by Jasmin.

Roll call vote: Fallon – Aye, Bartley – Aye, Jasmin – Aye, Michnovez – Aye, Kaja – Aye, Fowlks -- Aye, Osenar--Aye

Approved on March 30, 2021

Approved 6-0

Then the committee discussed drafting a statement to introduce themselves to other diversity-celebrating groups in Boxborough. Fowlks questioned who the recipients would be and the purpose. The committee discussed and then agreed the purpose of the letter should be to introduce the DEI committee to other Boxborough committees and departments.

Michnovez, Kaja and Jasmin volunteered to draft the letter, and Fowlks and Fallon offered to advise when needed.

The committee then revisited creating an 'anti-racism pledge,' which was discussed at the committee's February 17th meeting. Fallon believed it may have greater effect after town meeting. The committee agreed the postponement would allow momentum to build, and decided to delay until after town meeting.

Then, the committee began to discuss affordable housing in Boxborough. Jasmin believes increasing affordable housing in Boxborough may also increase types of diversity.

Fowlks recognized the difficulties attempting to implement affordable housing in Boxborough would provide, including lack of land or real estate in Boxborough suitable for developments, and that the town surpasses the 40B threshold.

Fowlks added 'affordable housing' refers to the affordability of housing to townspeople already in Boxborough, rather than affordability to newcomers. The committee considered this and decided to use a more specific term than 'affordable housing,' such as 'moderately priced housing,' or 'reasonably priced housing.'

The committee then discussed methods to gather community members input on diversity, equity and inclusion. Bartley offered an anti-racism conversation at the library as a space for distributing surveys, and offered to assist Osenar, Jones and Michnovez with creating a survey.

Osenar contacted the Acton DEI Commission, and received a copy of the draft of the questionnaire they have created. She also expects to receive a final copy for the Boxborough DEIC's use.

Fallon questioned the length of the survey, which the members predict will be relatively short.

Michnovez asked if the town had hired a new community services coordinator, to which Fowlks replied that they were in the process of hiring one.

Fowlks suggested introducing the DEIC to the new community services coordinator, once one has been officially hired. The committee supported this idea.

Approved on March 30, 2021

The committee then decided on a next meeting date of March 24th at 7:00pm via Zoom.

At 8:53, Fowlks moved to adjourn. Seconded by Fallon.

Roll Call Vote: Fallon – Aye, Bartley – Aye, Jasmin – Aye, Michnovez – Aye, Kaja – Aye, Osenar – Aye,

Fowlks -- Aye

Approved 7-0