

Town of Hartford Committee on Racial Equity and Inclusion

Wednesday March 3, 2021

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

In Attendance: Allene Swienkowski (She/Her), Joe Major (He/Him), Sara Campbell (She/Her), Russell North (He/Him), John Hall (He/Him), Giavanna Munafo (She/Her)

6:01 PM Call to Order

- Approve meeting minutes from Feb. 17, 2021
- **MOTION:** Ann moves to pass, Joe Seconded. Passed Unanimously

6:02 PM Acknowledge Community Members

- In attendance: Brigid and Molly Armbrust, Peggy Richardson, Pat Autilio, Michelle Boleski, Kim Souza
- Allene shared conversation she had with Laura Perez about an even for March 17th with the Special Needs Support Center
 - 3/17 - 10am:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82615802837pwd=aStTR2RVN2gvQnNQeHpCeFE5dFNJdz09>
 - About SNIP: <https://lebanonnh.gov/1282/Special-Needs-Information-Program>

6:06 PM Meet and Greet with our new Town Manager Tracy Yarlott-Davis

6:36 PM Break-up into subcommittees

7:01 PM Subcommittees return to full committee

- **Policy**
- The sub-committee is now focusing on research into mission statements, policies and procedures of VT Towns of comparable size for language specifically targeted to issues of anti-racism, racial equity and inclusion of all marginalized groups to consider for recommendation by HCOEI. Next Steps exploring sample social media policies from other towns and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.
- We also present to HCOEI for consideration the following recommendation to the Town Select Board:

In beginning our work reviewing Town Polices through a Racial Equity and Inclusion lens, we encountered difficulties accessing a complete set of policies, discovered conflicting sets of policies, and discovered a social media policy who's adoption status is currently unknown.

Our recommendation, therefore, to the Select Board is that during the update of the Town website, attention should be given to making all Town Policies and Ordinances accessible in searchable format.
- **MOTION:** Sara moves on behalf of the Policy Sub Committee to make the above recommendation to the Selectboard. Giavanna seconded. Passed Unanimously
- **Education**
 - Resource Library was completed by the deadline of Monday March 1 and shared with school district and community audiences.
 - Next steps: Discussion around audience, updates and edits process.
 - Discussed the first school staff training that was conducted on March 2.
 - Is there any blowback from community members ?
 - Not so far - when does it rise to a level of engagement? Want to be proactive.
 - Mention of NH HB 544, and act around the discussion of divisive topics in schools specifically around racism and sexism.
 - It is important to stay on top of community/parent feedback.

7:18 PM

Discussion

How the Town of Hartford responds to acts of bigotry, harassment, threats and what are effective steps to support victims.

- In a response to recent and specific incidents in our community, including a board member resignation, would like to create a framework on how to guide and assist individuals that have suffered harassment and threats.
- Discussion Framework Shared:
 - Types of incidents - what is the level of the threat
 - Abuse on Social Media
 - By citizens
 - By employees
 - Personal confidential data released
 - Physical Harassment
 - Verbal Harassment
 - Frequency/Volume of incidents
 - Multiple participants engaging in pattern/trend of personal attacks
 - Effects?
 - Existing means for accountability
 - AG Database (State Executive)
 - Human Rights Commission (State Legislature)
 - Gap Analysis
 - Data Gathering
 - Proposed systems to fill gaps
 - Local database/reporting system
 - If reported to the police
 - Evaluated if a crime has been committed
 - First sent to State Police
 - Then to States Attorney
 - Next to AG office
 - AG office contacts the HPD
 - Potential Responses
 - Advocate system (help navigating the bureaucracy)
 - Sub groups to study specific issues
 - Resource: Xusana Davis, Racial Equity Report:
https://racialequity.vermont.gov/sites/reap/files/doc_library/RETF%20Report%202%20Final.pdf
- Questions:
 - How to engage local level states attorneys
 - How to get limitations on hate speech on the state level
 - Where do you report incidents besides the police?
 - What would immediate or long term support and assistance look like?
 - What would advocacy support role look like?
 - Would this fall under the community wellness office?
 - Use other community support services as resources (WISE, SNSC, Restorative Justice Center)
 - Potentially create an ad hoc committee similar to the one created for homelessness

Next agenda

- Committee Reorganization after election/committee appointments.
 - Elect officers
- Continue discussion "How the Town of Hartford responds to acts of bigotry, harassment, threats and what are effective steps to support victims."

7:30 PM

Adjournment

Sara moves to adjourn