

Hartford Committee On Racial Equity and Inequality

Meeting Minutes

9/4/18, 7:00 PM

In attendance: Nancy Russell, Michelle Boleski, Allene Sweinckowski, John Hall (Chair), Ann Reynolds, Simon Dennis (Clerk), Sara Campbell, (Vice Chair)

Absent: Jameson Davis (Joined via conference call at 7:30)

John called the meeting to order at 7:02.

The minutes of 8/21/18 were moved by Allene, seven votes in favor and zero opposed.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the goals outlined in the previous minutes.

Sara read the following draft 8-month goals from the previous minutes:

- John suggested identifying and vetting organizations that could benefit the Town and School District in advancing HCOREI's work. Allene suggested that this process could include putting together a list, doing preliminary research, making contact, and having a criteria for acceptance.
- Ann suggested we should continue to request the Selectboard and School Board that they release an RFP regarding training as outlined in the HCORI Recommendations and perhaps support Selectboard/School Board coordination in that process.
- To identify what is the work of HCOREI in relation to the School District.
- To continue to request the Selectboard and School Board to release an RFP for developing a strategic plan for equity and diversity. Simon mentioned the Hackman Consulting Group. <http://hackmanconsultinggroup.org/>
- To understand the culture of the HPD and the DA's Office and educate ourselves about what local, regional and state law enforcement are doing.
- To talk to Andrew Winters at Twin Pines Housing Trust and others to learn about the history of racial discrimination regarding housing.
- To establish a grievance process regarding workplace, housing, law enforcement, etc. for people experiencing discrimination and get word out that HCOREI is a resource in this regard. This process should be developed in collaboration with the institutions that are involved in this process.

- Ann suggested adding that HCOREI focus on the impact of language and help the community begin to use the appropriate language. Sara suggested educational programs that could help the community gain greater facility with vocabulary relating race that could help to demystify some of the vocabulary. Allene suggested starting with the selectboard and school board so that certain phrases not be understood as an attack. Ann asked if this is a subheading of education. The words “white supremacy” and “white privilege” were mentioned.

John suggested that we should prioritize these.

Kim Sousa mentioned that in January, there is a plan to hold a general forum on race through SURJ, Dandelions, that would provide basic Racism 101. Perhaps HCOREI could be a part of this.

Nancy mentioned that it is important for HCOREI to develop a partnership with the Boards and with the Unions and the Teachers. This requires listening to both sides.

Are there trainings that the State is already recommending? Better to not try to reinvent the wheel.

Simon suggested that the RFP’s for Training and Planning, the partnerships with other anti-racism groups, and the education regarding language were rising to the top four. Sara suggested that the understanding HCOREI’s relationship with the School District should also be on the top of the list.

What about advocacy regarding the Summer Camp at Stowe and the Stepping Down of Kiah Morris. It was agreed, that the Committee would field ideas for meaningful responses as these emerge.

Sara made a motion to make HCOREI’s top five objectives should be the following:

1. To collaborate with other anti-racism groups in the region.
2. To continue to support and check up on the RFP for Racism Education for Elected officials and department heads for Town and School District.
3. To Continue to support and check up on the RFP for Strategic Planning for Equity and Inclusion.
4. To advance local education to help the community get on the same page regarding language.

5. To advance HCOREI's understanding of its role and relationship with the school district.

Nancy seconded. The motion passed with seven votes in favor, zero opposed.

Ann made a motion that HCOREI assign a delegate to the creation of the Climbing Poetree Concert. The motion was seconded by Allene. Sara discussed her conversations with OPAL which is not yet ready to commit. **There was considerable discussion and the motion passed seven votes in favor, zero opposed.**

Jameson mentioned that there was a post on Facebook in response to a recent article in the Valley News about the Selectboard's treatment of Counsel's Revisions to the HCORI Recs that singled him out and said he should go back to Africa. It was agreed that this matter is very serious and should be taken up at a subsequent meeting.

John suggested that one or more organizers of the panel discussion be invited to a subsequent HCOREI meeting.

Sara suggested some topics for next meeting. Protocols for facebook. How do we respond in the event of incidents of racism. For example: Valley News, Kiah Morris, Facebook.

John made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:02, Michelle seconded and all were in favor.

Humbly submitted,
Simon Dennis, Committee Clerk