

Scituate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (SDEIC)

Previously known as: Advisory Committee on Equity and Justice for All

Tuesday, May 4, Amended MINUTES

2021 6:30pm (Eastern time)

via Remote Participation due to COVID-19

In response to Governor Baker's declaration of a public health emergency and the related Emergency Executive Order dated March 12, 2020, Town of Scituate public meetings shall meet remotely until further notice. This meeting will be recorded by Scituate Community Television and can be viewed live on Scituate Community Television Facebook Live. The recorded meeting will be available the following day on Comcast Channel 9 and YouTube Scituate Community Television. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGvisxM18QA>

Members Present:

Non-voting Members:

Bob Clark
Maura Curran
Amanda O'Shea

Voting Members:

Angela Riberio-Dray
Celia Richa
Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders
Thomas Secaur
Lucia Silveira
Natasha Stewart
Kate Swope (new member)
Ruth Yasin

AGENDA

1. Call the Meeting to Order, Read the Remote Participation and Viewing Options, & Tribal Acknowledgement - Madame Chair Sanders.

Motion made to open the meeting by Ms. Yasin. Seconded by Vice Chair Secaur.

Roll call vote - Unanimous approval - 7-0

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Lucia Silveira - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

- Madame Chair Sanders called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and read Governor Baker's declaration about remote meetings along with viewing information (posted above)

2. Safe Space and Norms

- This is a safe space for people of color and for all underrepresented people and communities. Any comments that are inappropriate or have an animus in racism or bias will not be allowed. Will turn off sound if your comments are offensive to the meeting.
- This is a safe space where people can bring up challenges and questions without fear of repercussion or hostility
- Take the learning, but leave the story, so that people feel comfortable sharing their experiences
- Assume best intentions. All participants are embarking on this journey at different starting points
- Listen/read and be kind
- Use respectful language - ask when you are unsure.

- Administrators may remove anyone with inappropriate content or acting inappropriately.

3. Acceptance of Minutes of 04/20/2021

Motion made by Ms. Richa. Seconded by Ms. Dray .

Roll call vote - Unanimous approval 8-0

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes
 Celia Richa - yes
 Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes
 Thomas Secaur - yes
 Lucia Silveira - yes
 Natasha Stewart - yes
 Kate Swope - yes
 Ruth Yasin - yes

4. Welcome to Ms. Swope and Introductions

5. Public Comment

- Ruth Yasin - Introduced STRIDE- Scituate Together for Representation, Inclusion, Diversity & Equity - a community organization involved in DEI work in the town, with FB and website ScituateStride.org.
- Stephanie Burke - Scituate Pride - events coming up in June - submitted an application to SSB for a Drive Up movie, and Walk on June 26, a First Friday event, Straight Talk Event, and a speaker series with Robin Ochs. Also will offer a Progress flag to businesses in Scituate, and for a small sponsorship fee, will offer the Scituate Pride Flags for businesses to display. Madam Chair Sanders noted that there is also a website, Instagram, and proposed rainbow crosswalk.

6. Old business

• Liaison Reports

- Jen Arnold - SPS Liaison - Ms. Arnold is retiring. SPS has hired a new DEI director, Jamele Adams. He will help SPS move forward with DEI efforts and be the glue to help hold people together. Ms. Arnold asked if Mr. Adams can be the district liaison moving forward. SPS has a DEI planning and response team consisting of administrators in SPS and is developing a protocol for reporting and investigating discrimination, harrassment, and retaliation so SPS has consistent process across the district.
- Select person Curran - Reminder that there is an election on May 22 with a contested school committee position.
- Mike Hayes - School Committee Liaison - there was a new incident in SPS - involves shaming of women, POC, races, adults, and children and originated from the Middle School. Will be addressed at the school committee meeting on Monday at 7:00pm. It is an awful and disgusting situation that will be a major issue, police have been involved.

• Massachusetts Cultural Council Presentation

- Expected visitor was not present. The MCC has grants and can bring attention and funds to cultural events.

- Discussion/Vote of Process for Incidents Based in Bias in the community
 - Madame Chair suggested that we might work on how the community handles an incident based in bias and what that process could be. How do we handle a process to be better as a town to make residents feel safe?
 - Rev. Stewart - would like more clarification as we discuss during a meeting, so more specificity is important. Talking around an incident without naming the incident is not informative. For example, state that there was an incident of vandalism in a Chinese restaurant. Madame Chair noted that we do have to be sensitive about what is shared in an open forum. Lt. O'Shea noted that any discussion must be fact-based - we can't talk about rumors or hear-say. Also she can not discuss ongoing investigations.
 - Selectperson Curran clarified that we should not just focus on an individual incident, but on what our DEI committee can recommend to the SSB to help deal with any upcoming incident. For example, may recommend that a Social Worker become involved. Lt. O'Shea noted that anytime there is an incident based in-bias occurs, then the Social Worker Erica Souris is notified. The SPD is well-trained, and asked that people trust that the SPD will follow. Ms. Dray noted that there are times that we need to look at the current procedures and see if we can't make them better, especially using the lens of DEI when dealing with incidents involving sensitive populations. Perhaps we can provide some recommendations that would help a victim, including those that are immigrants to help improve the process.
 - Selectperson Curran suggested part of evaluation with Public Safety be discussing how to proceed with these types of incidents.
 - Madame Chair Sanders questioned about what we should do if we, as members of the SDEIC, hear about a problem? Who should we call? What questions should we ask? Who should we direct them to? If someone contacts us, we need to know what to tell them.
 - Mr. Clark noted that the original charge of the Incidents Based in Bias Work Group was criticized by SSB Chairperson Karen Canfield - that it was reasonable to assume that if people were reporting such incidents, that they would also expect some action to be taken, but taking actions is not in the scope of the SDEIC. However, what might be better would be to develop a process to help direct people when there is an incident, but that reporting would not come to this committee. He suggested revisiting the Working Group's charge. And that we don't need to discuss specific incidents, but rather keep focused on the process.
 - Madame Chair Sanders agreed that we might want to revisit the charge of the Incidents Based in Bias Working Group, but disagreed about discussing specific incidents. Do we want to recommend that a DEI committee be part of the process of being involved when an incident is reported?
 - Ms. Richa noted that as we meet with the Public Safety department heads as part of our review of Town Departments that we ask these questions to find the processes that are currently in place. Then we can review the current process and may make a recommendation that someone with DEI capabilities, whether

in our committee or in another role, becomes part of the process to deal with these types of incidents.

- Mr. Clark noted that there are current processes in place for a criminal complaint, also for a Town of Scituate personnel issue, but outside of those examples, if there is an incident in the community, then there isn't a defined process. Madame Chair Sanders agreed that there is a gap in the process. She asked what are the steps in the process? Especially taking into consideration that there are people who are uncomfortable dealing with police, and may turn to SDEIC members.
- Rev. Stewart - We will need to review the current processes and get input from the current officials in order to make any further recommendations for any missing steps in the process. The SDEIC members are not a place for people to report issues, and need to keep our focus on the processes. Vice Chair Secaur agreed that "Review, Report, Recommend" are the steps that we need to go through to resolve gaps in processes.
- Madame Chair Sanders mentioned that other towns have Human Rights Commissions to help victims navigate the process of dealing with an issue. And if someone comes to SDEIC with a report of an incident, then what should we do? Selectperson Curran responded that we need to continue the review of departments to help us understand what the current processes are before we work to solve the gaps.
- Madame Chair noted that she had some suggestions. First, naming the incident discreetly but with enough information for people to understand what has happened. Also a recommendation that the town hire a person, either a DEI Director or have a person of color in the discussion to fill the gap. Suggested that if an SDEIC member learned of an incident, that at a minimum would report it to a member of the Select Board. Asked committee members to contact her with recommendations to fill the gap if something happens which would not normally involve the police or the Select Board. Further suggested that the town establish an independent Human Rights commission and/or add to the charge of this committee to allow further involvement with these types of incidents to include the reporting aspect.
- Ms. Yasin mentioned that she doesn't know what many of these points would look like - how would a Human Rights Commission be established, and what are other ramifications of the other suggestions? Would like to have this information presented to us, and not just a list of links. We would need information on all of our choices before we could make a recommendation. Madame Chair suggested that the current committee Based in Bias could investigate these questions and report back to the SDEIC.
- Mr. Clark noted that we still need to formally understand what gaps exist, and need to do further work to identify. Also, we need to recommend things that the Select Board has authority over. What level of authority does the Town have when residents are interacting, not to the level of a crime?
- Madame Chair stated that she didn't feel that we need any authority over anyone to make up processes on how to support someone who has

experienced an incident based in bias. She again reiterated that hiring POC as a DEI director would be an important step in supporting people.

- Update on the collection of Surveys from Department Heads
 - Vice Chair Secaur - sent out the survey responses- received back 22 of them - a response from each department. Next step is to prioritize specific departments - recommended Public Safety, Board of Health/Social Services, Library, DPW, in no special order, to be the first departments to review. Ms. Richa echoed Mr. Secaur's list, and noted that especially due to Covid and the increased role for the BOH, that Board of Health was a high priority department. We then would break into working groups to brainstorm questions and then move to the virtual meetings.
 - Ms. Richa notes on responses that we received: We asked a lot of questions about hiring, but wondered if Mr. Clark has the funding to widen the pool? Survey respondents often stress that qualifications and experience are important in hiring - but in reality, skills are often more important, and not as subjected to bias (eg lower income or minority applicants may not have the extra schooling or opportunities, but may be well-skilled), so we would need to reshape hiring policies to adjust hiring protocols. Very few respondents said that they had witnessed any incident based in bias, but they may not know how to identify these incidents. They noted that they would like training but don't know what training. One respondent noted that it was important to build the ability for people to voice their concerns in a safe space, and Ms. Richa agreed that this was an important piece for effective customer service - that they should be given equal access to resources and follow-up. Police want to do community engagement, but may need more community connection, especially since Covid has even more made this difficult, and we may wish to help accelerate this process since trust is such an important part of how effective they can be within the community. This also goes for the Fire Department, since paramedics are often first responders in difficult incidents. Finance stood out because they noted procurement and were open to help. IT has access to information and can reach many marginalized communities, for example the elderly, who may struggle with technology, may need greater assistance. So an equity lens is important to think about when seeing what departments have to offer for DEI. The SDEIC can help departments realize that they do have a role to play in DEI and help them understand the diverse populations they can assist.
 - Other comments on the responses to the survey: Vice Chair Secaur noted that training is important - suggest that we mandate training for all departments, which will vary based on the type of department.
 - Ms. Silveira - agrees that you need a person of color to assist when there is a problem and to help define the issues. She also liked the idea of a DEI director - would be a way to show that we value inclusivity. She echoed other statements that there are cultures who do not feel comfortable dealing with the police when they have a problem.
 - Ms. Dray - noted that out of the 22 departments, 13 stated that they had

- experienced a concern that could be addressed by a DEI effort. She suggests that training and education are important and that people want to have training.
- Ms. Yasin - need training- some responses showed that there is still a need to understand the concepts: what is DEI, what are systemic racism and implicit bias?
 - Mr. Clark - responded that departments have begun initial steps to start thinking about their job with the DEI lens - just going through the process of collecting evidence is beginning the education process. Mr. Clark has enrolled Scituate in online training modules through LocalGovU - want to try to add to the offerings to include anti-bias training and then will mandate people to take certain training. Would like to do live training once post-Covid, because it is much more effective when it can be more interactive. Will keep us informed. The National Municipal Association has made these types of training available. Vice Chair Secaur would like SDEIC to be able to see this tool.
 - Selectperson Curran suggested that the training be mandated, especially for unconscious/implicit bias training. And perhaps a speaker post-Covid.
 - Rev. Stewart noted that we need to make it clear that this is ongoing education - that these training sessions are just the beginning and will become part of our influence as a town, not just a check-the-box and done.
 - Vice Chair Secaur noted that people are a product of their own experiences, and if you don't have experience with different backgrounds and cultures, you can't see their perspective without added training or experience.
 - Selectperson Curran added that this initiative comes from the top down, so that when people see that this is a priority from the administrators, and that it is an ongoing priority, that there will be a continuum of effort.
 - Madame Chair noted that DPW is the second largest budget, so is that a focus on the interviews. Also, should there also be a focus on finance in the second round of questions to see if this shows inequities in different areas.
 - Agreed that the Finance Dept. should be left until after tax season.
 - Mr. Clark liked the initial list of Police/Fire, DPW, BOH, Library - if add Finance, these are most of the larger departments and it makes sense to start with them.
 - Vice Chair Secaur suggested that we break out into Working Groups based on people's interests. Ms. Yasin noted that people should let Mr. Secaur know which, if any, departments interest them, and we can then schedule the working groups. We would then go back to the SDEIC committee to refine the developed questions.
 - Ms. Dray is interested in Public Safety/Police.
 - Vice Chair Secaur suggested that the Social Worker be interviewed with the Police.
 - Mr. Clark suggested that the Board of Health, Social Services, and FACTS be the first departments to be interviewed because they may educate us to understand what is available in town before we discuss further with the other departments.
 - Conor Doherty - offered to help with the group conversations
 - Vice Chair Secaur gave the example of Public Safety - that both he and Angela

are interested in being part of that group. We can have up to 4 members on a working group (Ms. Yasin incorrectly stated that could have 3, but this was later clarified in a follow-up email). Other members of SDEIC could also send in their questions to this working group. Mr. Clark, Lt. O'Shea, and Ms. Silveira are other non-voting members who might be involved, with Lt. O'Shea for Public Safety. We will also determine who the meeting will be with, eg. the Police Chief and whomever he chooses. Mr. Secaur will send around an email to ask people to sign up for 1. Board of Health/Social Services/FACTS, 2. Public Safety and 3. DPW.

- Discussion/Vote on Next Steps for Evaluation of Initial Departments

- Madame Chair Sanders suggested that people watch the video by Town Administrator Jim Boudreau which spells out the operating and capital budgets in Scituate: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZBwE05OoOU> 11:00 start)

People should develop questions about how different departments allocate their budget and how finances affect DEI in their work. People could then make recommendations based on this information or the process used to determine spending in a department, eg. there may be questions on pay equity.

- Ms. Yasin noted that these questions can be integrated into the interview questions we are developing. Or that we might want to do it in a request for data rather than in a discussion.
- Mr. Secaur added that budget questions would be very appropriate - including, where do you spend your money? Are there grants? How do you spend better? Because our recommendations will probably reflect fund availability.
- Mr. Clark clarified that discussions might not prove fruitful for pay equity because most of the positions are determined by the union pay scale. There are some non-union positions. Also that the training lines are in the Town Administrators budget line.
- Selectperson Curran suggested that we get data about what percent of the budget is training, and what types of training are currently offered.
- Mr. Clark noted that there are specific mandated training for people, for example for certifications for water department personnel. He also thought that the training budget has not been tapped as much this year due to Covid, so there may be money available.

- Town Discrimination Policy Discussion - Ruth Yasin and Bob Clark

- Mr. Clark has updated a policy on Anti-Discrimination, Harrassment, and Retaliation. Ms. Yasin gave an executive summary to the committee. Ms. Richa recommended the pronoun use of "they" rather than "he/she, him/her." And would like clarification if the policy is in relation to employees relationships with other employees or for an employee's relationship with visitors. Mr. Clark responded that the policy is focused on employees, but that the town also has a

duty to make sure that no vendor, distributor, or contractor harrasses any employees. Also, employees may not discriminate against a visitor, contractor, or vendor. May need to develop another policy if a resident or customer feels harassed. This policy goes further than the model MCAD requires, e.g. this policy demands same-day notification of an infraction, and gives multiple examples of prohibited behavior. Mr. Clark wanted SDEIC review on this policy and will now take it to the unions and the SSB. Mr. Clark also clarified that the town does have a social media and sexual harassment policies that have been integrated into Union contracts.

- Discussion/Vote on Name for Subcommittees/Project Teams
 - Ms. Yasin noted that calling a small group a subcommittee meant that the group would have to follow all open meeting laws, whereas if a small group which focuses on research is called a Working Group, then it does not have to follow those rules.
 - Ms. Yasin noted information on quorum and small group sizes (though it was incorrectly stated and later clarified in an email. The correct information is that a quorum is 5 or more of the 8 voting members, and a Working Group can be up to 4 members).
 - Ms. Yasin made a motion that any Subcommittee be renamed a Working Group. Seconded by Ms. Swope.
Roll call vote - unanimous yes - 8-0
Angela Riberio-Dray - yes
Celia Richa - yes
Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes
Thomas Secaur - yes
Lucia Silveira - yes
Natasha Stewart - yes
Kate Swope - yes
Ruth Yasin - yes
- Future agenda item is to revisit the charge of the Incidents Based in Bias working group
- Discussion of Mr. Boudreau Finance Video, Town Meeting, Town Charter and Vote on Changes to Process
 - Madame Chair said that we will not discuss this item now. Suggest that people watch the video on finance and look at minutes about proposed changes to the Town Charter, which is how the town is run
- Update on HUC Survey - Postpone for another meeting

7. Administrative

- Calendar Review
- Next date for Recommendations
 - Madame Chair advised members to think about the next time we could make recommendations to the SSB preferably in June. We could use

information from tonight's meeting. Selectperson Curran advised to wait until mid-June because the board reorganizes after May 22 and there will be a new chairperson who manages the agenda. Ms. Yasin will add suggestions to the Proposed Project Plan, update Slack, and then we could review this next meeting.

- After discussion it was determined to remove the 7/27 meeting, and add 8/17.

8. New Business

9. Other Business (that may properly come before the Committee after agenda is posted)

- Madame Chair Sanders noted that it is AAPI Appreciation Month - read something to educate yourself.
- In Hopkinton a black female child was found hanging from a tree. This is just coming into the news, but happened two weeks ago. We need to think about what is our responsibility as we step forward as a member of a DEI committee. It is a huge obligation because comments and small actions lead to tragic consequences if we don't have the right processes and people in place. Our recommendations need to be not only in line with the charge of this committee, but also our larger charge.
- Connor Doherty noted that the reason for the delay in reporting about the young woman's death was related to their towns' employees. This highlights how important the work DEI is in towns.

10. Future Agenda Items

11. Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Madame Chair Sanders. Seconded by Ms. Yasin. Meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.

Roll call vote - Unanimous approval 8-0.

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes
Celia Richa - yes
Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes
Thomas Secaur - yes
Lucia Silveira - yes
Natasha Stewart - yes
Kate Swope - yes
Ruth Yasin - yes

List of Documents:

- SDEIC Master Workbook 4-27-21.xlsx -Tom Secaur
- K Canfield Notes on Progress Recommendations.pdf
- Executive Summary Scit Anti Disc Harass and Retal 4-23-21 - Word.pdf- Ruth Yasin

Future Meeting Dates - 5/18, 6/1, 6/15, 6/29, 7/13, ~~7/27~~ (Removed), New Date- Aug 17

****Public comments will be limited to one (1) minute per individual. "Public Comment" time will be limited to 10**

minutes total. Any time beyond that will be at the discretion of the Chair so the Advisory Committee on Equity and Justice for All can proceed with items on the agenda. Any person making a comment that is deemed by the Chairperson to be offensive or inappropriate may be silenced. The committee will take items under advisement and items raised may, at the discretion of the Chairperson, be added to a future agenda. At the Chairperson's discretion, public comment may be allowed on today's agenda items when they occur during the meeting. If no public is present at the public comment section, this section may be concluded early.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Yasin