

Scituate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (SDEIC)

Tuesday, June 29, 2021 - 6:30pm MINUTES

via Remote Participation due to COVID-19

Governor Baker's declaration of a public health emergency and the related Emergency Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 has been extended until April 22, 2022. 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=PmweoO1PgMI>

Members Present:

Non-voting Members:

Bob Clark
Maura Curran
Amanda O'Shea

Voting Members:

Angela Riberio-Dray
Celia Richa
Thomas Secaur
Natasha Stewart
Kate Swope
Ruth Yasin

Absent: Amanda O'Shea

AGENDA

1. 6:30pm Interim Chairperson Tom Secaur - Call the meeting to order, read the remote participation and viewing options

Motion made to open the meeting at 6:30pm by Interim Chair Secaur . Seconded by Ms. Dray .

Roll call vote - unanimous approval - 5/0 (1 absent)

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Kate Swope - abs

Ruth Yasin - yes

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. Update on Committee Membership

Interim Chair Secaur noted that Nikki Sanders has stepped down from the committee, so we will need a community member to fill her position, and we also need to fill the Town of Scituate representative. Ms. Curran clarified that the Select Board is interviewing for the community position through its annual posting for open positions on Town Boards. They will interview people as soon as possible, possibly early August. We have a candidate for the Town of Scituate employee position, a new Firefighter, Jim Six Tiger, who will interview with the Select Board at their next meeting.

4. Discussion and Vote - Election to replace Administrative Positions

- Motion made by Ms. Yasin and seconded by Ms. Dray that Tom Secaur be nominated for the Chairperson position. Mr. Secaur accepted the nomination and stated that he appreciated the support and wants to be an ally and appreciates the investment of both committee and community members who believe in this path.

Roll call vote - unanimous approval - 6/0

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Kate Swope - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

- Motion made by Ms. Yasin and seconded by Rev. Stewart that Angela Dray be nominated for the Vice Chairperson position. Ms. Dray accepted the nomination and voiced her support for the work that the committee is undertaking.

Roll call vote - unanimous approval - 6/0

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Kate Swope - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

5. Acceptance of Minutes of 6/1/2021

Motion to accept minutes made by Ms. Richa and seconded by Chairperson Secaur.

Roll call vote - unanimous approval - 6/0

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Kate Swope - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

6. Public Comment (taken out of order)

Conor Doherty - suggested that the SDEIC meet with the Scituate Cultural Council. The SCC bestows grants to enable the art we see throughout the town. We should think about the communities that are represented in this art and see if the SCC could encourage art that is more inclusive and representative of minorities in our society. Mr. Secaur and Ms. Yasin agreed that this is a good idea and that as the SDEIC finishes speaking with the currently scheduled groups, that the Cultural Council would be a good one to meet with. Mr. Adams agreed that these grants are a great way to highlight diverse artists and talents.

7. Liaison Reports

- Ms. Curran - no update from Scituate Select Board. Mr. Clark had no update from Town Hall.
 - Ms. Yasin - STRIDE - Scituate Stride.org and Facebook page - will not have meetings during the summer, but is publishing a summer reading list and will be selling bumper stickers as a fundraiser.
 - Ms. Dray - July 5 is Cape Verdean Independence Day - Groups are supporting celebrations including a Cape Verdean Band 6pm at the Bandstand on July 2, and the Scituate Library has books, craft kits and a poetry reading on July 8 at 6pm at the library. This is the first time this celebration has taken place with support from Scituate Pride, Scituate Education Foundation, the Scituate Harbor Business Organization, Scituate Economic Development Commission, Ms. Dray, Stephanie Burke, and others.
 - Mr. Adams SPS Liaison - Appreciated the PRIDE Open Mic event and looks forward to having more opportunities to get the community together. He has been actively getting to know students at different schools through various games, and student self-made book presentations, and being a guest in some classes and activities. As school begins in the Fall, he will be in each school as a member of the school's community each week. Hopes to have a big celebration at the beginning of the year to affirm the community.
8. DEI Director Jamele Adams discussing Freedom Team - jadams@scit.org
- Mr. Adams developed the concept of a Freedom Team during the unrest when African American citizens were protesting the murder of black people in communities. He developed a 10 point model which would be customized based on the community. The purpose of the committee is to preserve freedom through unity in the community.

- Begun 8 years ago. Essential personnel components in a Freedom Team: students, parents, a political representative from the Town, a person representing the educational network, the Chief of Police, a lawyer (good if familiar with civil rights law, but not essential) , a representative from the clergy, a clinician who does therapy from a trauma informed lens, someone trained in doing restorative and transformative justice, a person who can navigate social media.
- The team meets monthly to be proactive, reactive, or retroactive for any incidents of bias or hate. When something happens in the community, the community already knows who they can contact and Freedom Team members are willing to come together to help deal with the issue. A hotline phone number is connected to the Chief of Police and a person on the committee - the town could provide the phone and the number, or it could be a Google number or a dedicated phone that is also linked to the police. (If emergency or immediate danger, people are informed to call 911). There is also a web site monitored by the chief and member of a team. Meetings are held in common spaces where community members are welcomed. Meetings may address specific issues, or may involve training or other public interest topics.
- The Freedom Team addresses all kinds of incidents, often through word of mouth once people know that the team is active. Incidents have included dealing with racial epithets, concerns by multilingual employees at a supermarket, assisting students who were planning rallies and protests to facilitate conversations with their schools, Pride flags destroyed, sponsored programs to facilitate discussions in a community about diversity and trust. The team also proactively does things for the community to be helpful. It is meant to be complementary to other community organizations.
- There is currently a network of five Freedom Teams - Natick, Hopkinton, Waltham, Wellesley, and Franklin. Mr Adams is currently in discussion with other communities also considering setting up a Freedom Team. They can offer each other support and advice. Both Franklin and Hopkinton have good websites to see what they are doing (web search Franklin Freedom Team/Hopkinton Freedom Team).
- Mr. Adams is in discussion with the Chief of Police in Scituate, but does not yet have other members lined up for Scituate, though he is speaking to multiple groups and would like references for people who would be good components in the team. He hopes to set things up in September.
- Questions: What is the length of a person's commitment? So far only students have resigned or people have moved. The existing teams have

not set any term limits. The community can also decide how many members in a team - Hopkinton has about 17 members, others have 8-12.

- When there is a phone call, if it is a situation where there is any danger, then the police 911 number is advised, but otherwise other members of the team can be mobilized to touch base with appropriate community resources, or if less urgent, then the issue is brought up at the next scheduled meeting.
- This is a completely independent body - designed not to need any funds, and is a grassroots effort to be stand-alone, not connected to the town government. People trust the team members because they are members of the community.

9. Update from Working Groups

- SPD - Ms. Yasin, Ms. Dray and Chairperson Secaur - Questions have been circulated, but will still be tweaked. The Chief wants to meet in person, and so we plan to meet on Aug 20.
- DPW- Ms. Richa & Ms. Yasin - Questions have been circulated, but will still be tweaked. Mr. Clark will assist in setting up a meeting.
- BOH/FACTS/Social Services - Rev. Stewart, Ms. Swope, Mr. Clark, and Chairperson Secaur met virtually with Erica Souris, manager of Social Services; Andrew Sheele, the Board of Health Director; and Annemarie Galvin, FACTS director. The meeting was more of an initial discussion to review the charge and goals of SDEIC to help them understand our role, and they provided a good understanding of what they deal with on a day to day basis including community engagement, and how they train town employees. Rev. Stewart acknowledged that the town departments are doing a lot already, but they could see room for growth especially in setting up some training for more community connections and procedures. Annemarie Galvin had a lot of ideas of what SDEIC could do to drum up interest and community involvement. Mr. Clark noted that it was good to learn what the Social Worker does - it does seem that there needs to be a more streamlined way to get referrals to her, but that she is a good resource. He also noted that Don Knapp, The Veteran's Director, was not able to be at this meeting, but that he is also an excellent resource. Ms. Swope commented about how The Council on Aging and The Senior Center are connected - these formal and informal pathways may need to be more developed so that more people know who to reach out to for Social services. Rev. Stewart felt that all of these groups cover the variety of ages and groups in town, but feels that there are ways to work towards being more effective especially around DEI efforts. Mr. Secaur suggested that Annmarie Galvin can be helpful with a lot of community connections, including information that would help in writing grants. The SDEIC

working group plans to meet again with this group, and then will make recommendations. Ms. Richa noted that we need to consider that not all citizens are comfortable going to the Senior Center, and we need to think about what are other ways of reaching people who do not go into town buildings. Mr. Secaur mentioned that they will be developing and circulating follow-up questions for their next meeting.

(see Public Comment - taken out of order)

10. Review Project Plan & previous comments from K. Canfield (*Review...Report...Recommend*) - what to update or pursue to generate recommendations to Select Board

- Chairperson Secaur shared the updated document, DEI Project Plan 06 19 21.xls, He noted that he would like SDEIC to again use this document as a way to help us get to our recommendations using it as a tracking mechanism to collect the ideas into a progression that will end up as recommendations or not. We would use this document each meeting as an update.
- Ms. Yasin noted that some of the ideas previously presented to the Scituate Select Board were not on our Project Plan. We received some feedback from Selectperson Canfield with suggestions that might help these ideas become more acceptable to the SSB, but the SDEIC never followed up on them. She agreed with Chairperson Secaur that the SDEIC should capture more of the suggested ideas in the Project Plan document. We also need to review the ongoing Working Groups to make sure that these groups are active and supported by at least one member of SDEIC.
- Rev. Stewart noted that developing safe space norms is one of those suggestions that was suggested to the Select Board, but is not reflected in this document. Ms. Richa and Ms. Dray both offered to work together to help develop a statement on Safe Space norms.
- Chairperson Secaur concluded by asking SDEIC members to look over the document and give comments/suggestions about format or things to be included to himself or Ms. Yasin.

11. Discussion on MA Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth Recommendations -

- Ms. Swope noted that this document and the 2 page executive summary are good resources in regards to LGBTQ youth. LGBTQ youth, especially those of color and trans individuals, are especially vulnerable during crises, for example Covid. What steps can we take to help our most vulnerable youth be well supported?
- Mr. Secaur noted that it is a comprehensive document with a slew of recommendations, so what could we adopt to recommend to the SSB? Ms. Swope agreed to look over the document to see what we could use -

she noted that in general, activities that are welcoming and affirming are ways to support young folks. Ms. Yasin noted that specifically we need recommendations to the Select Board about what they can support.

- Ms. Swope will forward this document to Mr. Adams so that he can send it on to appropriate individuals in SPS.
- Ms. Curran noted that this document should also be shared with the Public Safety departments so they can see it too to help sensitize them and perhaps help them develop training in this area.
- Ms. Swope highlighted the concept of single-stall gender neutral bathrooms as an important issue to address for comfort and safety. Selectperson Curran, Ms. Swope, and Mr. Clark agreed to work together to develop the further information needed to present information to the SSB about current gender neutral bathrooms and what could be done going forward. Ms. Curran mentioned that signage was one of the important pieces to help people know that these resources exist. Ms. Richa added that it would be a good idea to have Family options with changing tables in such bathrooms and that we need to make the recommendation that gender neutral bathrooms should be part of future builds.
- Rev. Stewart reflected that it was great to have Selectperson Canfield at the Scituate Pride parade, and we should invite participation of the Selectpersons in diversity events to help develop a connection between town leadership and townwide DEI efforts.

12. Discussion on timing for SDEIC presentation to Select Board.

Chairperson Secaur and Selectperson Curran suggested that we target September as the next time we report to the SSB. Ms. Yasin noted that we do not need to recommend anything if we are not ready to do so, but the September date would still be a good one just to update the SSB on what we are doing.

13. Other Business (that may properly come before the Committee after agenda is posted) - none

14. Administrative

- While we are currently meeting remotely, we also have the option of meeting in person. If we have a quorum, we can meet in person (at least 4 voting members) and then 2 can dial-in via conference-call or Zoom. The details on how to do this are still in the works, but they are options that we might consider in the future.
- Future Agenda Items
 - Chairperson Secaur will not be available for the July 13 meeting, but Vice Chair Dray will chair the meeting
 - MA State Representative Joan Meschino will be addressing us on July 13.

- Ms. Yasin will look into future meeting dates, keeping the SSB schedule in mind and will present these next meeting. It was agreed that we would now maintain a once monthly schedule unless something came up. Between meetings the working groups would do their work.
- Future Meeting Dates - 6/29, 7/13, 8/17 with more to be presented next meeting.

15. Close Meeting and Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Chairperson Secaur at 8:19pm.

Seconded by Rev. Stewart.

Roll call vote - Unanimous approval 6/0

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Kate Swope - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

List of Documents:

- DEI Project Plan 06 19 21.xls - Tom Secaur & Slack
- MA Commission LGBTQ FY22 Exec Summary.pdf

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Yasin

****Public comments will be limited to one (3) 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 Scituate Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee can proceed with items on the agenda. 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.**