

Scituate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (SDEIC)

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

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 16, 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=cyiPk9qDWPg>

Members Present:

Non-voting Members:

Bob Clark
Maura Curran
Amanda O'Shea
Lucia Silveira

Voting Members:

Angela Riberio-Dray
Celia Richa
Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders
Thomas Secaur
Natasha Stewart
Ruth Yasin

Absent - Kim Harriman

AGENDA

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

Madame Chair Sanders called the meeting to order at 6:29 pm and read Governor Baker's declaration about remote meetings along with viewing information (posted above). Motion to convene the meeting made by Ms. Richa. Seconded by Ms. Yasin. Madame Chair Sanders recommended the book *This Land is Their Land*, by David J. Silverman.

2. Safe Space and Norms

- a. 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.
- b. This is a safe space where people can bring up challenges and questions without fear of repercussion or hostility
- c. Take the learning, but leave the story, so that people feel comfortable sharing their experiences

- d. Assume best intentions. All participants are embarking on this journey at different starting points
 - e. Listen/read and be kind
 - f. Use respectful language - ask when you are unsure.
 - g. Administrators may remove anyone with inappropriate content or acting inappropriately
3. Acceptance of Minutes of 03/02/2021 - Motion to accept by Ms. Richa Seconded by Ms.Dray.
 Unanimous acceptance via roll call vote - 6-0 (1 absent)
 Kim Harriman - absent
 Angela Riberio-Dray - yes
 Celia Richa - yes
 Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes
 Thomas Secaur - yes
 Natasha Stewart - yes
 Ruth Yasin - yes
4. Public Comment: What are your hopes for the DEI Committee? What Goals do you think the DEI Committee should have? Will you volunteer to assist the Committee?
- Ms. Sanders read statements that were sent to her (no names provided)
 - the committee focuses a lot on process and project planning and is not focusing on more important issues.
 - No one from this committee has spoken to anyone who had contributed to the public comment section in the last meeting. Ms. Richa asked about how we would reach out to a person who spoke at a meeting. Ms. Sanders responded that we could contact Ms. Sanders or another person who has a relationship to a member of the public, or offer to speak off-line with the person. Ms. Richa stated that as members of this committee we want to be responsive, and we feel that the comments are worthy of follow-up, but we haven't had the chance to meet and deal with these issues since last meeting, but feels that we are taking the suggestions seriously and that we will follow up on the ideas that were presented.
 - Ms. Sanders had another comment that the DEI committee needs to listen to the chair's concerns when a person of color is speaking.
 - Sheena Sanders Smead - feel that there has been a lot of pushback and focus on process, but that it is more important to really listen to what people of color are saying. Nikki has a lot of experience and that people should pause and be more accepting of her views.
 - Rev. Stewart - A clarification that the committee is half people of color, and so both perspectives are represented in our conversations - white, and people of color.
 - Mr. Secaur - Feels that we need process, and once we can agree on some basic steps then we will be able to do the work within the community engagement. Understands that there is some frustration that we haven't

gotten moving, but wants the process to be settled by this or the next meeting.

- Ms. Sanders says that we have given people a place to speak out and that community members are grateful for that part. People who are not feeling included appreciate that there are community members in this committee who are concerned. People notice who is showing up for them.
- Ms. Curran acknowledged that although learning the committee process is challenging, it might be helpful to split into separate paths, e.g. a survey of the community, so that we have more than one activity going at a time. Ms. Sanders stated that this was a suggestion that would be addressed later in the meeting.
- Ms. Smead - acknowledged that there are other people of color, but there is a feeling that there is definite push back directed at Nikki as the chairperson of the committee.

5. Old business

a. Liaison Reports

- Select Person Curran - The Select Board will take up the matter on whether the Town employee position can be modified to become a voting member of this committee in its 3/23/21 meeting. Senior Center staff is now in the new building, and once Covid decreases they will be able to allow community members into the building. The Town of Scituate 2022 budget has been approved, and April 12, 7pm is Town Meeting. The warrant is 24 articles and details are posted on the Town Website.
- Ms. Arnold, though not present, sent a comment - The Search Committee for the position of Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been reviewing applications. They chose 4 applicants to interview, and then will meet to determine finalists. They will have a forum to introduce the finalists and have them answer questions. SPS has created a small DEI Planning and Response Team that has met once. The mission for that team is to support professional development for cultural proficiency, support principals' responses to allegations of civil rights violations, and make policy recommendations to the School Committee. SPS will conduct an Equity Audit using the consultant, Beloved Community. Next meeting will provide data concerning racial harassment incidents within the district. Vice Chair Secaur would like more information on the focus of the Equity Audit.

b. Update on Select Board's decision on Town Employee as voting member - see above

c. Discussion/ Vote - Use of Community Survey Created by Hingham Unity Council for South Shore

- This survey by the Hingham Unity Council was designed to reach people on the South Shore, and wanted to include Scituate in this process. Clarified that they will be able to segment the data to send to us so we can

see Scituate's data. In Hingham they are putting it on the town web site and library site. (Viewed the South Shore Community Diversity & Wellbeing Survey). Select Person Curran suggested that it could go out via the town email service and a couple of other places if sent to Mr. Boudreau, and that the committee should write an introduction about the initiative so people would understand that the Scituate DEI committee is involved. Rev. Stewart also offered to share this out through the Clergy Association. The full results, as well as the town results will be sent to us.

- A Motion was made by Ms. Yasin to accept the Hingham Unity Survey and disseminate it through various channels in Scituate. Seconded by Vice Chair Secaur.

Roll call vote - unanimously approved 6-0 (1abs).

Kim Harriman - absent

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

d. Discussion/Vote - Setting up Subcommittees on Youth and Incidents Based in Bias

Proposed charge (** shows amendment added during discussion- some edits made for clarity*):

SUBCOMMITTEE ON YOUTH -The Establishment of a Youth Subcommittee to the Scituate Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee, whose charge is (i) to collect information on incidents based in bias among the town's youth, (ii) to provide an anonymous way for youth to report when such incidents take place, and (iii) to report to the SDEIC *monthly**, and offer suggested recommendations before its quarterly presentation to the Select Board. (*as sent in email by Ms. Sanders 3/11/21*).

- Various concerns were raised, including that youth subcommittee members might need emotional help in dealing with the traumas that could be reported to them. Also, that youth subcommittee members might need resources to assist them to help those youth who are reporting incidents. There were also questions about the legal issues of working with minors, how this work might affect ongoing criminal investigations, and how the category of "youth" would be defined. How will this subcommittee incorporate Metco students? There are concerns about anonymous submissions, and how we manage expectations about what we can do without knowing specifics.
- Ms. Dray clarified that there would be at least one committee member and possibly other adult members along with the youth members to assist the

youth members. Chairperson Sanders stated that she is interested in serving on this subcommittee.

- There seems to be a great interest among students of all ages, and even among youth who are not students in the SPS system.
- Madame Chair Sanders responded that these valid concerns will be addressed by the subcommittee and that the subcommittee will deal with these types of issues as they come up. The reports from the subcommittee to SDEIC may address these issues with their recommendations. She offered suggestions on possible ways of collecting information online, digitally, or by voicemail - and along with reporting an incident, the person would be asked what they'd like to see happen, but a disclaimer noting that this reporting is only for information and to assist in making recommendations to the Select Board. Vice Chair Sanders said that she would be speaking with Lt. O'Shea about some of these issues, and also hoped that SPS representatives would also provide guidance.
- Ms. Yasin asked to amend the original charge to ask the Youth Subcommittee to report back to the SDEIC monthly on what they are doing.
- Ms. Yasin made a motion to vote on the amended charge. Madame Chair Sanders Second the motion.

Roll call vote - unanimously approved 6-0 (1abs).

Kim Harriman - absent

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

e. Discussion/Vote - Setting up a Committee on Hate Crimes (*Name later revised*)

Proposed charge (** shows amendment added during discussion- some edits made for clarity*):

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INCIDENTS BASED IN BIAS - The Establishment of a Subcommittee to the Scituate Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee, whose charge is (i) to collect information on incidents based in bias throughout the adult populations of the Town, (ii) to provide an anonymous way to report when such incidents take place, and (iii) to report to the SDEIC *monthly**, and offer suggested recommendations before its quarterly presentation to the Select Board. (*as sent in email by Ms. Sanders 3/11/21*)

- Madame Chair Sanders said that this subcommittee, which may be better named a Subcommittee on Incidents Based on Bias, is needed to help us

be able to gather information from people of color about the difficult situations that they face.

- Lt. O'Shea would be concerned by reporting hate crimes to a committee rather than to police. Also, there is an anonymous tip line on the Police web site for crimes which sees much activity.
- Rev. Stewart raised concerns that we need to be clear about what we can offer to people who report - as a subcommittee we may be able to offer support, but we probably can't fix the problems. She also wondered if the police tip line could be used to give us information on incidents based in bias.
- Mr. Clark suggested that we set up a system so that all data collection would be done anonymously, but that we also provide information about how to report to the police, or other resources to help the individual reporting. This would help us gather data that we may not be getting at this time, limits our liability, while still offering resources and support.
- Mr. Secaur feels that this charge is addressing information brought up by a public commenter last meeting - that people feel that there isn't a safe space to report, and that incidents go unreported because people don't feel that anyone will listen.
- Madame Chair Sanders is concerned that the tip line is not going to catch all the incidents, especially for people of color who do not feel comfortable going to the police or Select Board. This gives people another, more accessible point for people to speak what they have experienced. People would need training about how to do the work on the subcommittee.
- Ms. Richa wonders if we want a larger mechanism for people to share perhaps by creating a subcommittee to address community concerns.
- Ms. Dray agrees that people want to share their stories. She noted that a local community member was concerned about her daughter being referred to by a person using an ethnic slur. The two subcommittees we are planning would give a place to voice this issue.
- Ms. Curran would like to target the focus on issues related to the town, eg. a town department, or a town sponsored event, rather than just problems with neighbors or in general. In this committee we can only focus on town related issues. Because the reporting to this subcommittee would be anonymous, we need to keep in mind that we are not receiving both sides of any story. There are both benefits and challenges with this type of reporting, though the benefits outweigh the challenges.
- Madame Chair Sanders disagrees and feels that we shouldn't shy away from dealing with things outside of the town departments - we need to take the temperature of the town. It is important to gather as much information as we can. Would hope that any member of the SDEIC will drop into any of these subcommittees at any time. These subcommittees will also allow general committee work to continue and will then give the SDEIC the information that is collected.

- Madame Chair Sanders and Ms. Dray committed to being on this subcommittee. Madame Chair Sanders will talk with Lt. O'Shea about suggestions to address the concerns raised.
- Ms. Yasin suggested to amend the original charge to include monthly check-ins, even if brief, and recommendations before the quarterly Select Board reports. Madame Chair Sanders agreed.
- Ms. Yasin made a motion to accept the formation of a Subcommittee on Incidents Based in Bias, as amended. The motion was Seconded by Vice Chair Sanders.

Roll call vote - unanimously approved 6-0 (1abs).

Kim Harriman - absent

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

- f. Discussion/Vote - Questions to ask Town Boards/Committees and next steps forward - Mr. Clark, Ms. Richa, Mr. Secaur & Ms. Yasin

- Reviewed the document Scituate DEI Committee Questions 3-11-21. Since last month, the process has been streamlined so that after an initial meeting between Mr. Clark and Selectperson Curran with the Town department heads, this subcommittee would send out a questionnaire to the department heads so they can document their responses to the questions. We then would follow up in small group virtual meetings to review the information, gather further details, and department heads can provide a brief overview of their committee. This subcommittee would then look at this information to develop further questions for all Town personnel.
- Questions were raised about SDEIC members' roles going forward with this process of data collection, and whether all members wanted to be involved. We are starting other activities with our newly formed subcommittees in the area of community engagement. Some members might want to take on both activities, while other members might want to focus on only one strand.
- Madame Chair stated that this seems like a good start, but may need to reexamine by the time we get to steps 4 & 5. There are still things that are not fleshed out all the way, and may need further development after steps 1-3 are completed.
- A motion was made to accept the Questions and Process as outlined (with caveat that Steps 4 & 5 will be reviewed at a later date) made by Madame Chair Sanders. Seconded by Rev. Stewart
Roll call vote - unanimously approved 6-0 (1abs).

Kim Harriman - absent

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes
Thomas Secaur - yes
Natasha Stewart - yes
Ruth Yasin - yes

6. Administrative

- a. Discussion - Creation of Initial List of Proposed Recommendations for First Quarter Report
 - Mr. Clark is developing a personnel handbook for town employees and we will offer support/guidance.
 - Review public bathrooms in public buildings and ask if there can be non-gender options.
 - Mr. Clark will be sharing wage and race data with the committee to help analyze our current status.
 - Important not only to give recommendations, but also to give status-updates Update on the youth subcommittee, and our other committees.
 - Recommend that all town, board, and committee meetings develop some sort of safe space norms.
 - Recommend that the Select Board would share information with us that may include diversity issues so we can advise them.
 - Recommend that the Town sponsor more diverse cultural celebrations, including doing something on the upcoming Juneteenth.
 - Develop a way for tourists to know which businesses support inclusion, whether by placing a symbol in the window, flying a flag, or some other way.
 - Have town meetings that are focused on these issues specifically to encourage community engagement.

Can add more recommendations at our next meeting

- b. Update on Slack Use
 - Not all committee members are on Slack, and not all of those receive notifications when something is posted, so when you want to notify the committee, please send the attachment to all members as well as posting in Slack. It is highly recommended that people receive written material for topics to be considered in advance of the meeting. If you want to receive notifications, you can do so on your Slack account.
 - Please do not respond to any posting on Slack - just use it to store documents, not respond to them.
 - If you would like the committee to review anything, please email and put into Slack written information by the Friday before the Tuesday meeting.
- c. Discussion- Proposed Requirements for Project and/or Sub- Committee Acceptance - Vice Chair Secaur

- Reviewed document - Proposed Requirements for Project and/or Sub-Committee Acceptance - as a way of moving suggestions to a vote quicker than in the past. Suggest voting at the next meeting.
 - Madame Chair Sanders suggested adding a mission statement and draft charge, like the one submitted for the committee's accepted tonight.
- d. Discussion- Use of DEI Project Planner to monitor proposed and ongoing projects - Ms. Yasin, Ms. Dray
- Reviewed the document - DEI Project Plan - as a way of keeping track of ongoing projects/subcommittees and possible projects that we may consider. There are a lot of ideas out there, but we need to find a way to capture these ideas so they are not lost, and make sure that we have committee members willing to take on the positions before we commit to working on them as a committee.
 - Recommend that committee members look over the document and give suggestions for next meeting.

7. New Business

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

- Ms. Yasin noted that Madame Chair Sanders would be solely in charge of preparing and posting future agendas, and reminded committee members that if they want to send information to be included on the agenda, or any information that they would want the committee members to review, that they should send it out in a timely manner. Madame Chair Sanders will post the agenda by noon Thursday before a Tuesday meeting so that it will be in compliance with the Open Meeting Rules. Ms. Yasin will continue to post it on the Town website.
- Madame Chair Sanders noted that some people have complained that they aren't being emailed the agenda. Ms. Yasin stated that she does choose the option to have e-notifications sent when she posts the agenda. Selectperson Curran will check with the IT person. And it was noted that people who had signed up before may have to sign up again since our name had changed. We will review this next meeting.

9. Future Agenda Items

10. Move to Adjourn Richa, Second Stewart roll call vote. Adjourned at 8:36pm

Roll call vote - unanimously approved 6-0 (1abs).

Kim Harriman - absent

Angela Riberio-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Ewuniki (Nikki) Sanders - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Natasha Stewart - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

11. Future Meeting Dates - 3/30*, 4/20, 5/4, 5/18, 6/1, 6/15, 6/29*, 7/13, 7/27

* We will finalize our presentations to the Select Board on these dates.

List of Documents:

Tom Secaur - Scituate DEI Committee Questions-3-11 -21.xls

Ruth Yasin - DEI Project Plan 03 09 21.xlsx

Tom Secaur - Scituate DEIC - SubComm Acceptance.docx

Nikki Sanders - see referenced email 3/11/21 above for Charge of the two subcommittees

Community Survey Created by Hingham Unity Council for SouthShore - South Shore

Community Diversity & Wellbeing Survey - <https://forms.gle/4C5ZacthjHESZQyn6>

****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