

Scituate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (SDEIC)

Tuesday, October 12, 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=tPJzuhB8AXI>

Members

Non-voting Members:

Bob Clark
Maura Curran
Amanda O'Shea

Voting Members:

Elena Gulotta* (*new member*)
Angela Ribeiro-Dray
Celia Richa
Jim Six Tiger
Thomas Secaur
Natasha Stewart
Kate Swope
Ruth Yasin

Members Absent: Natasha Stewart

Member in late: Jim Six-Tiger

AGENDA

1. Chairperson Tom Secaur - Called the meeting to order and read the remote participation and viewing options.

Motion made to open the meeting by Chairperson Secaur at 6:31 pm. Seconded by Ms. Dray.

Roll call vote - unanimous approval - 6/0 (2 abs)

Elena Gulotta - yes
Angela Ribeiro-Dray - yes
Celia Richa - yes
Thomas Secaur - yes
Jim Six Tiger - abs
Natasha Stewart - abs
Kate Swope - yes
Ruth Yasin - yes

6:35 Mr. Six Tiger joined the meeting

2. Acceptance of Minutes - 9/14/2021

- a. Mr. Clark offered an amendment - #7 -Review of project plan on gender neutral bathrooms - Change to Mr. Kelly not Cafferty.

- b. Chairperson Secaur moved to accept minutes as amended. Seconded by Ms. Swope.

Roll call vote - unanimous approval - 7/0 (1 abs)

Elena Gulotta - yes
Angela Ribeiro-Dray - yes
Celia Richa - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes
Jim Six Tiger - yes
Natasha Stewart - abs
Kate Swope - yes
Ruth Yasin - yes

3. Welcome to new member, Elena Gulotta - Ms. Gulotta introduced herself and said that she and her husband moved to Scituate about a year ago, though she had been in Boston for college. She currently works for a digital advertising company in Boston, has initiated DEI efforts in work, and holds the Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager role. To promote DEI efforts throughout the company, Ms. Gulotta works with various departments in the company including: Talent Acquisition, HR, People Management (for training and new processes), and a variety of employee resource groups. She finds this a rewarding professional role.

4. Liaison Reports

- Selectboard - Selectperson Curran -
 - There will be a Special Town Meeting on October 26 in the Scituate High School gym at 7pm. The big article is a proposal to set in motion the process to design a new elementary school. This feasibility study is the first step in the process. There is a CPC article with a request to purchase Border St. property for \$2 million from CPC funds to keep it as open space. There is also a petitioners article to allow operation of marijuana facilities in town (currently Scituate only allows medical) and rescind the moratorium we had placed two years ago.
 - There are many enthusiastic and strong candidates being appointed to town boards and committees - high calibre of people and strong civic participation.
 - Ms. Yasin asked Selectperson Curran to check into the updated SSB meeting calendar so then we can start setting our 2022 calendar. Selectperson Curran reported that on November 2 the SSB will vote on the 2021-22 calendar.
 - Ms. Swope asked whether the Scituate Select Board (SSB) receives any DEI training. Selectperson Curran replied that that has not been the case, but suggested that town boards should receive access and be asked to participate in DEI training, like the online training that Mr. Clark has available to offer. Mr. Clark noted that though SSB members can use the online training courses, he does not know if not know if they have done so. If Scituate would offer these courses to all boards, it would be a large number of people, possibly in the hundreds, and would be challenging to offer.

However all board and committee members currently have to sign-off on sexual harrassment and anti-discrimination policies. Ms. Swope noted that we may be able to get free training. Chairperson Secaur agreed and felt that we should definitely discuss this further, and Selectperson Curran thought it should be the number one priority for SDEIC to recommend to the SSB.

- Scituate Police Department (SPD) - Lt. O'Shea
 - Lt. O'Shea had been asked whether or not we had a Community Officer. She reported that SPD numbers are limited (down 4 officers) and so do not have the staff to do that now, though Chief Thompson is open to entertaining that idea. Multiple officers, SPaN officers who serve various neighborhoods, act as community officers until SPD is better staffed.
 - National Night Out was suggested as another form of outreach. Lt. O'Shea noted that they had not done this in the past, and Covid stopped outreach plans. Now that they are getting back to planning for outreach events, this suggestion was on the list. When the SPD has the staffing, then they would do so. Ms. Swope added that she would be happy to help with that initiative when it goes forward.
 - Mr. Adams mentioned that he loved the outreach at Gates where police officers played basketball and had other activities for between 80-100 students over the last 3 weeks - a great way to make meaningful connections.
- Scituate Public Schools - Mr. Adams
 - There have been positive responses from students, staff, and parents to the This is Our House program that began the school year.
 - Mr. Adams is at each school one day every week and is actively interacting with students.
 - The Lit line is active with multiple submissions.
 - There will be a Lit team in every school which will include 2 staff members and 2 student reps from every grade from grade 3 on up. Below grade 3, will work with the younger students so they also have a channel to express their views.
 - Affirmation cards are being shared between teachers, teachers-students, and students-students. Response has been positive.
 - There will be an advisory group called Lit Pad for parents.

- Freedom Team - are in the final stages of getting it set up, and Chief Thompson and Town Administrator Boudreau have been instrumental in getting it formed.
- Mr. Adams also wishes to get together with representatives from STRIDE, SDEIC, and PRIDE to sit at the table to move forward together to share information, work together, and make connections. Would then be able to add in other community organizations. Vice Chair Dray is interested in becoming the representative from SDEIC, with Chairperson Secaur or Ms. Yasin as back-ups.
- There is a Lit Committee being set up, which, among other things, will develop a process to address matters of hate or bias.
- Adams will post his goals and objectives on Monday on the DEI page on the SPS website.
- STRIDE- Ms. Yasin
 - Scituate STRIDE.org has again begun monthly meetings. The next meeting will be at 7:30 pm on Wed. Oct 27. The topic is Indigenous Peoples - including a STRIDE statement to MA legislature to support the Senate and House Bills for MA to adopt Indigenous Peoples Day. It is a good way to learn more about these issues and what is being done in MA, and in Scituate. STRIDE will encourage people to join the work to develop a Land Acknowledgement, support Indigenous Peoples Day for Scituate, re-evaluate the Town Seal, and other ways to support Indigenous Peoples.
 - Last weekend STRIDE also was informed about a hate speech poster in front of town hall. They notified the police who quickly removed it, and have been in touch with ADL and notified surrounding towns. ADL would like people to report to them and have seen an increase in this type of activity by known white supremacist groups.

5. Brave/Safe Spaces Discussion - Ruth Yasin, Celia Richa, Angela Dray

- Ms. Yasin discussed the concept of Brave Space to acknowledge the concerns that have been raised that a Safe Space might not allow discussions that challenge the status quo, and thereby benefit the white majority in a discussion. Vice Chair Dray prefers to use the phrase Safe/Secure Space because as a woman of color, she feels every space is a Brave space. However it is important to engage in dialogue while acknowledging the challenges that underrepresented people face when they share their views - to not have their opinions or views dismissed

because they are different from another's perspective. It is a code of conduct to be shared and though people may have different viewpoints, people need to respectfully listen in order to encourage people who are not white males and females to feel comfortable in meetings.

- Reviewed the document DEI Safe/Secure Space Statement. Selectperson Curran noted that she had shared the draft Safe/Secure Space document and some SSB members perceived it as limiting free speech. As a public entity, how you define inappropriate content can be very subjective, so she would recommend removing the statement about removing people with inappropriate content. Vice Chair Dray clarified that it is recommended that this would be read before meetings and also be posted. She also clarified that the document had one set of statements specifically for SDEIC, and the other set was for the SSB. Ms. Yasin had circulated information about Brave Spaces, and we can also circulate Ms. Richa's document on Safe Spaces.
- Mr. Adams noted that the terminology Safe Space evolved to Brave Space which acknowledges that risk for discomfort may be present in the meeting. These statements were used during workshops and professional development, but it is challenging to create a safe space for committee meetings that are public and posted on the internet. For members of the public who wish to comment during a SDEIC meeting, it is not really a "safe" space, and either we create a part of the meeting that is not broadcast out to the world, or people who comment during the meeting need to be aware that anyone can hear their comments and make the decision on whether to speak or not. We may want to remind folks that this is the framework we are working with. He questioned how we are securing the environment - how do we promise this?
- Vice Chair Dray suggested that in order to encourage open dialogue, yet acknowledge that underrepresented people have not always felt comfortable speaking, we state, "The committee's intent is to ..." Ms. Richa states that this is stating our values and should be read at the beginning of a meeting and can also be posted to clarify our expectations for all participants. Selectperson Curran suggested that we put this forward to the SSB as a policy that we ask all of our committees to adopt. Ms. Gulotta agreed that this should be a commitment with which any board member should agree to abide. Would also like it read at the beginning of every meeting. Noted that has only seen the terminology of Save or Brave Spaces in informal workshops, so suggested that the statements can be called something else to make it clearer on the intentions. Mr. Adams suggested an option, "In this space we value

freedom of expression and freedom of speech, but understand our community and so there may be repercussions you share - keep this in mind as you share.” Ms Curran likes the word, “commitment,” and would like a shorter version that is tightened up if we wish to read it to be read at every committee meeting. Chairperson Secaur noted that the phrase about punitive repercussions might be problematic. Ms. Curran noted that we would need town council to look at this before it is adopted to make sure that there isn’t wording that puts us at risk, and that the SSB has already had occasions where they have removed members of the public from a meeting and did not need a statement to do so. Our intent is not to limit free speech, and that has to be reflected in our wording. Ms. Gulotta likes the accountability of a commitment that we expect all members of the community to uphold these values. Mr. Adams suggested that we don’t need to follow what everyone else is doing, so avoid common names like “brave” or “safe” and instead state: “In this space, we are committed to the values of...” This is our way of customizing it for our town. Ms. Swope appreciates the word “respect” and suggested wording such as, “looking to encourage everyone to share opinions, especially marginalized communities, under the guise of respect. All thoughts and comments are welcome if done in a respectful way.” Ms. Richa noted that it is even hard to have these discussions, but creating this statement should be moved along, and we may wish to think of it as a living document that we may want to review every six months to year. Ms. Yasin did not feel that statements about removing people from a meeting should be part of this document, but for SDEIC it could be noted on our agenda under notes for Public Comment. And committee leadership always has the ability to remove a person from a meeting if someone is violating the norms of being respectful. She suggested that we may want to reword things and send them back to committee members.

- Chairperson Secaur would like to vote on it on Nov. 9 - can pass drafts around before that time. Selectperson Curran noted that she will provide feedback for the Selectboard draft.

6. Public Comment - none

7. Update from Working Groups

- Scituate Police Department - Ms. Yasin is working on finishing up notes from the meeting with SPD, and after the notes have been reviewed by them, will share them with SDEIC.

- DPW - Ms. Yasin mentioned that the notes from the meeting with DPW have been reviewed by the DPW, and now we need to make recommendations, and she intends to do this by the next meeting.
- Board of Health/Social Services/FACTS - Chairperson Secaur noted that this working group is in a similar situation, and just needs to move the process along.
- Discussed whether to move the discussion to the next boards/committees we would choose to interview, but decided to continue with our in-flight projects until we wrap some of them up and have some recommendations from current efforts.

8. Review of Project Plan and Opportunities Workbook

- a. Gender Neutral Bathrooms - Ms. Swope stated that she and Mr. Clark are working with Mr. Kevin Kelly who will get cost quotes for the conversion of a few of the restrooms to create single stall and gender neutral bathrooms. Also is getting costs for the signage. Mr. Clark noted that it should be possible to make fifteen of the seventeen identified bathrooms gender neutral.
- b. Sister City Project - Vice Chair Dray and Chairperson Secaur attended a meeting with representatives of the existing Sister City programs, who were very welcoming and encouraging of the effort to establish a Cabo Verde Sister City program. Vice Chair Dray has spoken to other members of the Cabo Verde community, and feels that this is definitely moving forward to develop a recommendation for the SSB. The Sister City committee has already established a non-profit Sister Cities Project for fundraising. As far as what are the next steps to set up a town committee, Chairperson Secaur spoke to Selectperson Vegnani and will run it past Selectperson Curran to determine when we make the recommendation to the SSB and what we'd need to do first.
- c. Chairperson Secaur added a DEI training taskforce to the Opportunities - Chairperson Secaur, Ms. Swope, Ms. Gulotta, and Mr. Clark volunteered to be in this group.
- d. Indigenous Peoples Day, Town Seal, & Land Acknowledgement - Chairperson Secaur suggested collapsing these categories into one, with which Ms. Yasin concurred because as STRIDE takes these initiatives forward they are approaching all of these in a series of goals.

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

10. Administrative

- Future Meeting Dates - 11/9, 12/14 - Selectperson Curran will let us know about SSB meetings so we can set our meetings into 2022.

12. Close Meeting and Adjourn - Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm by

Chairperson Secaur; seconded by Ms. Richa.

Roll call vote - unanimous approval - 7/0 (1 abs)

Elena Gulotta - yes

Angela Ribeiro-Dray - yes

Celia Richa - yes

Thomas Secaur - yes

Jim Six Tiger - yes

Natasha Stewart - abs

Kate Swope - yes

Ruth Yasin - yes

List of Documents:

- SDEI Project Plan 10 12 21.xls - Tom Secaur
- Background on Brave Space Affirm SDEIC - Ruth Yasin

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.**