

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – March 10th, 2025 Meeting

Status

1. Called to order by the Chair at 5:32 PM.

Present: Scott Whiting, Shelly Gibson, Danica Lamontagne, Flo Leighton, Anne Morrissey, Ariane Meno Kobo, Maura Oakes

Via zoom: Syed Zafar

Absent: Bistra Nikiforova, Breese Reagle

2. Public Comment (3-minute limit per speaker)

No one from the public was present for comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.a February 10 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes

Anne made a motion to approve the minutes, Maura seconded the motion; the motion passes unanimously.

4. Discussion Items

- 4.a Resource List

The group has continued to build a resource list for community members, searching for support and guidance on how to respond or be proactive in a variety of situations. The group suggested posting this list on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee's portion of the City's website. Shelly & Danica will double-check with City leadership and organizations to make sure there is permission to do so.

The committee discussed language and messaging, particularly given what is happening around diversity, equity, and inclusion at the federal level. Overall, members aren't interested in changing the name of the committee, especially given the process involved in doing that at the Council level. A few people reiterated the need for community members to know they are supported and have resources within/among the committee.

As members attend workshops and trainings, or find additional resources, please share them with Shelly.

- 4.b Eid Proclamation – Approval

Scott made a motion to approve the document with an amendment to move the 2nd sentence of last paragraph (starting with "Biddeford is proud..." to exist as its own paragraph, just before "Therefore...")

Anne seconded the motion, the motion to approve the proclamation with the above edit passes unanimously.

4.c Upcoming Events

Women's History Month & Black History Month will be celebrated this Friday (3pm), at McArthur Library, for an event with Theresa Okokon, host of GBH's "Stories From The Stage." Theresa will host a reading and discussion for her debut memoir: *Who I Always Was*.

Please consider purchasing the book at Elements ahead of the event and Theresa will stay after to sign them. This is an event for teenagers and above.

The Rec Commission will meet on March 31st but Scott is no longer available to join this meeting. Flo will reach out to Bistra to see if she can still attend.

4.d Project Updates:

- Pride – Anne shared that the planning committee is considering a weekday flag raising with the Mayor, residents, and local youth (potentially the 2nd or 3rd of June).
- Juneteenth – Flo gave a summary of a meeting she and Shelly had w/ Delilah; the overall goal is for the event to be celebratory and planned/driven largely by the BIPOC community. There are potential grant funds for this event if the committee agrees to co-sponsor it with Heart of Biddeford and the Maine Black Chamber of Commerce.
 - Scott made a motion that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee sponsor a Juneteenth event, Maura seconded the motion; the motion passes unanimously.
- Long term projects (re-visit)
 - Flo posed the question about whether or not the committee is still interested in its 2 long-term projects – Rec Commission partnerships and/or researching public bathrooms for the City.
 - The Rec Commission may/may not be able to partner with us based on capacity and their own projects are unknown.
 - What would it look like to embark on a project around public bathrooms?
 - Committee members could research and find out what other municipalities are doing and get feedback/insights into which spaces already exist in Biddeford that offer this service (businesses, library, Rec).
 - The group could also find out what properties are currently City-owned that have public bathrooms and/or potential locations for something like that.
 - Overall, what would the goal be for 2025?
 - The committee could create a recommendation pertaining to public bathrooms, how to fund them, and suggestions on the process, to give to the City Council in early 2026.
 - Shelly will reach out to Portland / Westbrook / Lewiston for a contact about public bathrooms.

- Anne will connect with people in York, Elliott, and/or Kittery.
- Flo will research the Kennebunks.

5. Meeting Adjourned at 6:50PM.