

City of Biddeford
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
December 11, 2023 5:30 PM City Hall Conference Room

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.
When: Dec 11, 2023 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/96983567573?pwd=cE5MSXo1THB1cFNaYVdoS3AwQ0lsdz09>
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Status:

1. Call to Order

2. Discussion Items:

- 2.1. Approval of Minutes
[November 13 2023 DEI Committee Meeting.pdf](#)
- 2.2. Education & Outreach Sub Committee Update
- 2.3. Policy Sub Committee Update
[_Best Practices for Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Community Engagement v0.2.pdf](#)
- 2.4. Card for the Mayor
- 2.5. Committee Debrief & Next Steps

3. Adjourn:

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – November 13th, 2023 Meeting

1. Called to Order at 5:32 PM.

Present (via zoom): Irene Brackett, Shelly Gibson

Present (in person): Liam LaFountain, Danica Lamontagne, Flo Leighton, Andrew Lovley, Bistra Nikiforova

Absent: Martha Jacques, Kayla Lewis, Anne Morrissey

2. Discussion Items

a. Approval of the Minutes

Liam made a motion to approve the minutes from October 16th.

Flo made a motion to second.

The motion passes unanimously.

b. Public Comment

Students from UNE were in attendance as part of a class assignment.

c. Sub Committee report outs

i. Policy

1. Best Practices for Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Community Engagement (document review)

Andrew gave an update on the process so far for creating this document, specifically that how we connect with the community is a DEI issue.

Suggestions were made to add footnotes, an appendix with additional resources when folks are accessing a non-digital format. Irene suggested changing the opening wording given it was a bit confusing who was writing the document (by naming both internal/external committees). Flo mentioned that this document could offer support and act as a guide for current and future committee members when talking with other groups of folks that might benefit from it.

The committee invited public comment on the document, so the question was asked: what kinds of projects or events do you have upcoming or planned when this might be used?

The group discussed the need for a more comprehensive bullet about evaluation and measuring the effectiveness of community engagement while utilizing this resource (under accountability).

Andrew suggested getting in touch with the three committee members not present and see if they have any comments or additions.

The policy sub committee planned to take the feedback of the folks present, and ideally the members unable to attend, and revise the document in the next sub committee meeting, for the full committee to review and ideally vote on at December's meeting.

ii. Education & Outreach

1. December Proclamation

Bistra made a motion to approve the December proclamation.

Flo made a motion to second.

The motion passes unanimously.

Flo & Bistra reminded the group that the Homelessness Awareness Month proclamation was approved in the last meeting and so Danica and Shelly agreed to get that to the Mayor the following morning.

2. Events Calendar

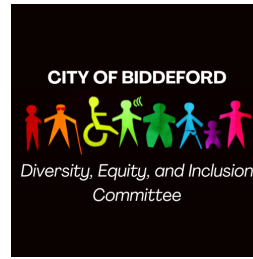
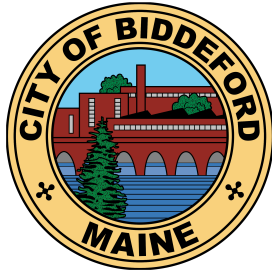
Shelly shared that Heart of Biddeford is asking for small groups of volunteers or participants to join any nights of Hanukkah. Support is needed on the first night setting up at 4:30pm (December 7th), with the lighting at 5:30pm. Folks are welcome to join any subsequent nights through December 15th, at 5:30pm.

McArthur Library is co-hosting the screening of 'Fighting Indians' with the City of Biddeford & and the Citizen DEI Committee. Please try to attend! It's on Tuesday, November 28th, at 5:30pm.

d. Card for the Mayor

Bistra had suggested writing and signing a card for Mayor Grohman, but given how many committee members were absent at the meeting, proposed doing this at the December meeting.

3. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.



Best Practices for Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Community Engagement

The City of Biddeford aims to create an atmosphere of inclusion and belonging across all areas of our municipal work. While this is an ambitious endeavor indeed, it is also one that can be exemplified by the ways in which we engage with the community. Whether we are hosting events, publishing various communications, soliciting input and feedback, and/or building partnerships across the city, each has the capacity to be designed, implemented, and evaluated through a DEI lens. Thus, we hold this truth at the core of our work: that each resident, business owner, student, and/or visitor of Biddeford, particularly those who have been the most marginalized, does not have to question whether or not they were thought of during the planning process; it will simply be true.

While this document is intended to be a guide (and potentially a checklist) for the planning and execution of varied forms of community engagement, we also recognize that language, context, and best practices are constantly evolving and will need updating. We hope that committees and City government will use the following steps and strategies to plan for and navigate circumstances they may not have considered, or those in need of further investigation.

If you have questions or would like to discuss this document in more detail, please contact the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator (shelly.gibson@biddefordmaine.org) and/or the Assistant to the City Manager (danica.lamontagne@biddefordmaine.org).

Active Engagement

Do members of the community have meaningful opportunities to be informed and involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of public programs that affect them?

- Consider how the community can be engaged across the *Spectrum of Public Participation* (Appendix B):
 - *Inform* the public of the issues and initiatives going on in their community
 - Social media campaign; City website; newsletter; press release; presentation; Public Access programming; paid advertising in newspaper

- *Consult* with the public to identify needs, preferences, or provide feedback on actions taken in the community
 - *Our Biddeford* (Appendix C), the City of Biddeford’s online community engagement platform (e.g., surveys, polls); e-mail requests for comment; public hearings; surveys by mail; focus groups; guest speakers
- *Involve* the public in the planning and implementation of the policies, programs, and decisions that affect them
 - *Our Biddeford*, the City of Biddeford’s online community engagement platform (e.g., option analysis, Q&A, mapping); advisory boards
- *Collaborate* with the public on projects and *empower* them to decide on actions taken in the community
 - *Our Biddeford*, the City of Biddeford’s online community engagement platform (e.g., ideas wall, participatory budgeting); partnerships with local organizations; committees; task forces; ballot measures

*Please refer to the appendix for more information about the *Our Biddeford* platform.

Accessibility

Do members of the community have access to programs and the ability to participate?

- Strive to identify which of the following circumstances might be preventing members of the community from participating, and address/accommodate for each as follows:
 - *Dis/Ability*¹: Choose locations for events that are accessible to everyone, particularly people with wheelchairs or limited mobility. Include subtitles on recordings, and/or provide for the needs of blind/low vision participants and those who are deaf/hard of hearing.
 - *Language*: Provide translation materials and/or translators for members of the community who are English Language Learners.
 - *Literacy*: Use plain language and concise communication, free of jargon and unexplained abbreviations.
 - *Time*: Host events and programs at different times to accommodate varied life/work schedules, and provide recordings/materials for those who are unable to attend.
 - *Location*: Host events and programs at locations that can be easily accessed by community members on their own or via public transportation.

¹ Dis/Ability: The word disability, when spelled without the slash, means that the person is identified by their disability, by what they cannot do. When slashed, this reminds people that people are identified by what they can do. (<https://students.wustl.edu/disability-education-self-study-guide>)

- *Technology*: Provide materials or channels for communication that are easy to find and review online. Include assistive technology² (Appendix A), as well as offline options for those who are less familiar with technology or do not have internet capabilities.

Accountability

Are we responding to feedback and maintaining reciprocal and sustainable relationships within the community, even after an event or project has concluded?

- Build trust and credibility by actively listening to those most often excluded or overlooked (i.e. BIPoC, LGBTQ+ folks, people with disabilities, the unhoused community, etc.).
- When soliciting feedback, acknowledge and validate the concerns, and be transparent about existing (and potential) limitations.
- Continuously review data and meet with constituents to remain familiar with who lives and works in the community.
- Ensure that groups who have been historically marginalized were invited, engaged, felt included, and want to continue to participate in the future.
- Report results once a project is complete so people can understand how their feedback was incorporated when making decisions.
- Following community engagement efforts, debrief and evaluate if participation levels met your expectations and consider what can be done to be more inclusive and equitable.

² Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. (www.atia.org)

Appendix B



Appendix B (www.organizingengagement.org)

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Appendix C - Tools Available on *Our Biddeford*

The City's online community engagement platform, *Our Biddeford*, provides a range of tools to gather feedback and involve residents in the decision-making process for local government. If you would like to use *Our Biddeford* for community engagement, you would set up a "project page" related to the item you are working on. Then, you can select from available tools based on what level of [public participation](#)¹ you are looking to promote – whether you would like to *inform, consult, involve, or collaborate with* the public.

An overview of the available tools is included below. Please contact the Communications Department for more information.

- *Inform* – A project can be set up with the goal of simply informing the community about the work you are doing. You can add images, text and attachments to explain what is happening with the project and outline the timeline for the project to be completed. This method is designed for one-way communication needs, so community members can read and learn but they cannot actively participate in making decisions.
- *Consult*
 - Surveys – This platform can integrate traditional surveys from the City's survey tool, Typeform. These surveys are anonymous and the results are not public. Typeform supports most common survey question formats, including multiple choice questions, short answer questions, rankings, and rating tools such as opinion scales.
 - Quick Polling – A quick poll consists of a single yes/no question, (dis)agree statement, or any other multiple-choice question (e.g., "Would you rather spend all funds on the new park, allocate it to the renovation of older parks, or do a mix of both?"). The identity of the respondents is anonymous but the results of the vote are public.
- *Involve*
 - Option Analysis – With option analysis, admins can provide a limited number of options, ideas, or scenarios on which citizens can vote and/or comment (for example, "Which of these park designs is your favorite?"). With this method, the community cannot add their own ideas, scenarios or options, but they can vote for options they like, leave comments on the proposed ideas, and have conversations with other users.
 - Q&A – Residents can submit questions for the project team to respond to. You can also use this tool to provide answers to anticipated "FAQs".
 - Mapping – Residents can share location-specific feedback on a map of the city. This method is particularly useful for planning and mobility projects. For

example, users could be asked to show on a map where they think new crosswalks should be added.

- *Collaborate*

- Ideation / Ideas Wall – The City provides a prompt, and users are able to freely submit their own ideas or answers. Other participants can vote and comment on the ideas.
- Participatory Budgeting –Using the participatory budgeting tool, community members can provide input on how a certain pool of money will be spent. There are two ways to do this:
 - With “Cumulative Voting”, project organizers set a maximum budget and identify several categories of spending. Participants can say how many dollars they would like to spend on each of those categories.
 - With the “Basket Exercise”, project organizers would identify several specific options for participants to select between that have a known cost. The participants can ‘shop’ for the combination of items/projects that they would like to fund, and cannot exceed the maximum budget that you set.