

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – October 16th, 2023 Meeting

1. Called to Order at 5:35 PM

Present (via zoom): Martha Jacques (until 6:40pm), Shelly Gibson, Kayla Lewis

Present (in person): Liam LaFountain, Danica Lamontagne, Flo Leighton, Anne Morrissey, Irene Brackett, Bistra Nikiforova

2. Approval of the Minutes

In regards to the minutes from September 11th, Shelly mentioned the need to adjust the date to 2023 and a few folks mentioned that Andrew and Martha's last names were misspelled.

- Irene made a motion to amend the minutes with the suggested grammar edits.
- Liam seconded the motion.
- The motion is approved unanimously.

- Once the amendments were made, Bistra made a motion to approve the amended minutes.
- Flo seconded the motion.
- The motion is approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment

No one from the public was present.

4. Discussion

a. Flag Update

Danica shared the changes required by the Policy Committee that lists the Council as the final governing/elected body to handle any appeals. The new/amended order of approval will be 1) the DEI Coordinator; if appealed 2) the City Manager; and if appealed again 3) the City Council (who will make the final decision).

b. Remaining Meetings in 2023 (Timing & Content)

Monday, November 13th, next full DEI Committee Meeting.

Monday, December 11th falls on one of the Hanukkah lighting evenings so perhaps that could be built into some of the meeting.

Danica shared that Sydney has officially resigned from the committee given a number of other conflicting responsibilities.

c. Sub-Committee Updates

- i. Policy: Liam shared that the group is finalizing a document that will help other committees work through events and the community's engagement with them through the lens of DEI. Andrew is re-formulating the list of guidelines and the

group hopes to bring the document to the full committee for the November meeting. This will ideally go well with an additional document a few City staff are working on that supports folks joining any board/committee/commission (in regards to expectations, general guidelines, etc.).

- ii. Education: Flo updated the group on upcoming events and the role the sub-committee would like to take to support those things (via Biddeford Beat, community celebrations, facts and write-ups, etc.).

Anne submitted a request to fly the Trans flag for Trans Awareness Week and Trans Remembrance Day (in November). There is no conflict with those dates and Danica is also waiting for the new flag policy to be approved before officially approving this request. Danica asked if the committee was making the request or if it was being submitted by Anne. There was discussion about initiating requests as a committee or reaching out to community partners to empower them to submit requests.

Irene suggested that the Education sub-committee discuss this further in their next committee meeting.

Shelly mentioned talking with Maura from OUT Maine about sharing testimonials from their Youth Advisory Council regarding Trans Remembrance/Trans Awareness that could be shared out more broadly (and given those folks are paid and have already agreed to share stories like this).

The group talked through the events for the rest of 2023 and where there is desired representation from the full committee.

In mentioning Hannukah, a suggestion was made to reach out to the synagogue about which evening they would like the most support. Bistra asked the group about why a connection would be made with a religious institution if this isn't happening consistently with other events/days of the year. Given this event is organized by the Heart of Biddeford, it was agreed that Flo will reach out to their admin about any support. Liam will also write a proclamation inclusive of all December holidays to share at the November meeting.

Homelessness Awareness Week is taking place in November and the group will be offering details, statistics, and myth vs. facts about homelessness to share in the Biddeford Beat and within an existing Proclamation.

- Given the need to adjust some language, Liam made a motion that the Proclamation be amended with updated content and submitted for the Mayor to read in November.
- Irene seconded the motion.
- The motion passes unanimously.

d. Committee Positions/Transitions

All positions within the DEI committee end at the end of the 2023 (and all committee terms end in December on any given year), but some committees are on a different cycle so not every committee is turning over right now. It has also been an institutional practice to have every position finish at the same time regardless of when a person joined any committee. Shelly and Danica are looking for language to support this latter point and this clarifying piece will hopefully be part of the guidelines that they are building/revamping.

In terms of a timeline, letters from the Mayor's office will go out to current committee members in November (next month) and folks can decide if they want to re-apply. If there aren't enough committee members remaining (and new ones haven't been reappointed yet), then the group won't have a quorum in January. Ideally folks will apply and be appointed and a quorum of 5 people is needed for a meeting. Appointments could happen the second Council meeting in December and/or the first Council meeting in January depending on when the new Mayor decides to appoint community members.

Sub committees can discuss and share in their small groups if they are planning to stay on for a 2nd term so the full group has a sense of timing and group composition.

5. Adjourn

- Bistra made a motion to adjourn.
- Liam seconded the motion.
- The motion passes unanimously at 6:51pm.