

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – July 8th, 2024 Meeting

Status

1. Called to order at 5:33 PM

Present (in person): Danica Lamontagne, Shelly Gibson, Flo Leighton, Maura Oakes, Scott Whiting, Breese Reagle, Andrew Lovley, Anne Morrissey

Present (via zoom): Bistra Nikiforova

Regrets: Syed Zafar, *Sarai Manyiel*

2. Public Comment (3 minute limit per speaker)

No one present.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.a June 10 2024 Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes made by Scott, with the addition of Anne's name as 'present', Maura seconded the motion, the motion passes unanimously

4. Discussion Items

4.a Documentation & Position Updates

Shelly's title has shifted to the Deputy Director of Human Resources, given the need for a 2nd in command in the HR department. The content of her work will not change and will encompass the full scope of the DEI Coordinator position. This DEI work is still very much a priority for the City and the change was approved by the Personnel Committee (consisting of Councilors Whiting, Belanger, Emheiser, and Ortiz), in addition to the City Manager and Director of HR.

This change will require some language shifts in ordinances and the Flag Policy, to be done later this year.

4.b Encampment Updates

Danica reviewed the memo regarding the closing of the encampment. She highlighted that Seeds of Hope opened on July 3rd (early) to accommodate for folks needing to transition away from the encampment before July 8th. Thankfully at present, there haven't been any arrests and residents are mostly packed up (about a half a dozen people remain). Storage was offered and included for larger, long term items, to be held at PW. Personal items can stay with people at Seeds.

Seeds has aimed to make admittance as low barrier as possible, offering space for pets and partners. Anyone interested in staying at Seeds can do an intake on-site when Seeds is open 9am-1pm (Mon-Fri) and 7am-7pm every day. Folks should be directed to Seeds with any questions.

Bistra asked the group about the committee's role within this project and others like it. There was some curiosity about the DEI Committee being consulted around something so impactful. Other committee members offered that listening to and showing up at council meetings, when possible, to voice any concerns or support, is very important. Time for what's going on at the council level could be prioritized at each committee meeting. Flo can reach out to Jake about visiting the next meeting, if he's available.

A reminder was made by Flo and Shelly that if anyone on the committee is asked to speak publicly about what is happening, to be sure to name they are doing that as a private citizen versus doing so on behalf of the committee. Any media inquiries can be directed to Danica.

4.c Projects Timeline and Volunteers for 2024

Overall timeline for the rest of 2024

- Proclamations need to be done 2 months ahead of time (i.e. if we wanted to submit something for the Sept. council meeting, we'd need to be prepared to discuss and vote on it during the August meeting).
- Biddeford Beat submissions require at least 48 hours advance notice.
- Ashura Proclamation (7/16 – Council Mtg)
 - Shelly will talk with the Mayor about the status of what was sent to him in June.
 - July 24th, write-up for ADA anniversary (on 7/26)
 - Shelly has a full page of what was written in the staff newsletter and what we included in previous years (she'll share with the committee).
 - Shelly suggested offering insights around commonly used phrases/language that are rooted in ableist culture, and ways to think about them differently, as another submission for July.
- National Night Out (8/6 – 4:30pm – 7:30pm)
 - Anne will see who is coordinating from PD and we may want to consider having a point person joining any planning.
 - Shelly offered for the committee to consider reviewing the Best Practices document to see how we might get more participation and communicate around the event so that folks know this is for everyone and meant to build relationship between the community and the PD.
- [River Jam](#) – August 17th (Sat, 11am – 9pm)
 - Flo & Breese can help with planning and supply prep but they won't be able to attend. Last year we had coloring books, candy, a raffle.
 - Some suggestions for 2024:
 - Hannaford donations (food/treats)
 - Bistra will reach out to Nick at Common Roots for a game that might overlap with our DEI work in some capacity.

- A large sign/tablecloth that community members get to sign and paint that the committee could use at future events (collaborative art banner)
- Survey for the community; what is something we can do to make the City more inclusive? What question(s) do we want to ask citizens?

Members are encouraged to continue checking the Council agenda items to see what folks want to be involved with moving forward.

4.d DEI Brochure (template)

Andrew will draft a few sentences about why DEI is important. The group wants to keep the story QR code and potentially use submissions in a later publication of the brochure. Bistra asked that we remove 'anonymously' from the suggestion to submit; it should not be required that someone share their name but it's important they have the option to do so.

Shelly asked "What is the goal of this brochure?" Folks said it's for information, awareness, a way to connect with other resources, hopefully creates engagement and an opportunity to hear from more community members.

4.e Group Photo

Danica and Shelly will look for photos from previous events, individually people can look for personal headshots, and ideally we'll all be present at the August meeting to do a group photo to add to the final draft of the brochure.

5. Adjourn: Meeting Adjourned at 6:53 PM.