

City of Biddeford
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
May 13, 2024 5:30 PM City Hall Council Chambers

Via Zoom

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.
When: May 13, 2024 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: DEI Committee Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/97788357288?pwd=Q00raW1qZjNoK0d5VUJscnMreWZVUT09>

Passcode: 047822

Or One tap mobile :

+13017158592,,97788357288# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,97788357288# US

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+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

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Status:

1. Call to Order

2. Discussion Items:

2.1. Approval of Minutes

[April 8 2024 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

2.2. Public Comment Policy

2.3. Revised Diversity Calendar (with suggested edits and purpose)

[2024 Diversity Calendar \(with edits\).pdf](#)

2.4. Events in May (Older Americans Month, Asian American Pacific Islanders Month, Jewish American Heritage Month)

2.5. Pride Month (June) - Planning & Events

2.6. Staff DEI Committee - Invitation

3. Adjourn:

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – April 8th, 2024 Meeting

Status

1. Called to order at 5:32 PM.

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

(via zoom): Syed Zafar

Absent: Scott Whiting, Sarai Manyiel

2. Discussion Items

2.1. Approval of Minutes March 11 2024

A motion was made to approve the March 11 minutes by Anne, Breese seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2.2. Meeting Procedures / Amendments

A review of meeting procedures highlighted that the group needs a quorum of 5 of more people for any voting/decision making. Members are asked to email or text the Chair if they are planning to miss a meeting or have to join remotely.

There was discussion about strictly following Robert's Rules throughout the full meeting, as outlined in the Committee Participation Guide. Anne suggested that through the Chair, the process is formalized and may keep members safer from public response or push back than a more informal and free-flowing discussion. Processes also keep the group inclusive of member input. It was pointed out by Andrew that historically the group didn't have a formal plan/policy and without one, the Chair has the right to interject and bring the group back on task. Calling on people for every comment might feel too restrictive. Bistra, Maura, and Breese agreed, with the latter pointing out that mindful moderation of the discussion is essential.

Anne made a motion for the committee to use Roberts Rules for voting purposes and otherwise, there can be open discussion on agenda items. Breese seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2.3. Attendance Policy

The committee reviewed the language approved by council in the Code about attendance.

2.4. Revised Diversity Calendar

Andrew suggested adding language at the top about the intention for the calendar and why it was created. Bistra seconded this at the end of the discussion and requested the discussion continue at the May meeting. Flo shared that initially these events were used as ways to collaborate with community partners, reminders and content for the Biddeford Beat and Mayoral proclamations. Anne added that they are opportunities to recognize things that aren't always highlighted.

The group went through the document and made a series of suggestions while also approving and/or commenting on the suggestions and edits Shelly had already made. They include (but are not limited to):

- International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust
- Black History Month
- Arab American Heritage Month – April
- Holi – Monday, March 25th
- Khmer – Saturday, April 13th
- St. Patrick's day – feast honoring Irish heritage
- Transgender Day of Visibility – March 31st
- First week of April is "Week of the Young Child" and Biddeford Ready! celebrates this annually
- Eid al-Fitr will be April 10 this year (this also needs to be changed in the Proclamation)
- Add Eastern Orthodox Easter – May 5th
- Military Appreciation Month – May
- National Day of Prayer - first Thursday in May (will be May 2, 2024) - signed into law in 1952, intentional show of interfaith relations
- Update June to only say Pride Month and leave off "LGBT". In the description, use LGBTQIA+ in the description, explain what the letters in the acronym mean and share that the plus is inclusive of all of those not mentioned including non-binary and two-spirit.
- Juneteenth – add that it was recognized as a Federal holiday in 2021.
- Incorporate Disability Pride Month language into ADA Act Anniversary
- Add Ashura (Evening of Tue, Jul 16, 2024 – Wed, Jul 17, 2024). Reference that it takes place on the tenth day of the month of Muharram (beginning July 7 in 2024), which is the first month of the Islamic calendar
- Arba'in or Arbaeen - Evening of Sun, Aug 25, 2024 – Mon, Aug 26, 2024 - 40th day of mourning for Shia Muslims – takes place 40 days after Ashura
- National Coming Out Day – define what it means to come out of the closet (sharing their sexual orientation or gender identity)
- Change National Native American Heritage Month description to say "the region we now call North America" instead of "nation"
- Update Winter Solstice into two sentences to specify that on Winter Solstice, Pagan and Wiccan faiths celebrate Yule.

Committee suggested some sort of color coding or other system to indicate which dates change annually. Shelly will make all of the suggested edits and the committee will vote on updates at the next meeting

2.5. Upcoming Events / Proclamations

The Committee reviewed the Eid al-Fitr proclamation as prepared by Syed. Andrew asked the Committee whether there should be more references to Biddeford in the proclamation. Bistra suggested that we have a future conversation about what kind of information we want to include in proclamations in the future.

Syed shared that the date will need updated from April 9 to April 10 in the last paragraph. The group agreed to change the language in the second paragraph to read: “Muslim neighbors *and beyond*.”

A motion was made by Anne to approve the proclamation with the updated edits. Flo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Members volunteered to write drafts on upcoming calendar items for the Biddeford Beat:

- Bistra – Older Americans Month
- Flo – Asian American Pacific Islanders Month
- Anne – Jewish American Heritage Month

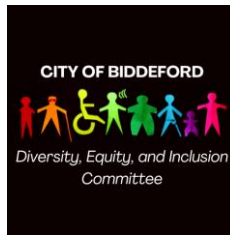
2.6. File Sharing Update

Danica gave an update to the committee that file sharing will be rolled out to Committee members when the City switches over to Microsoft Teams. This is expected to happen within two months.

2.7. Public Comment Policy

The group agreed to table this discussion until the May meeting.

3. Adjourn: Meeting Adjourned at 7:02 PM.



Biddeford Diversity Calendar - 2024

The purpose of this resource is to highlight events, celebrations, and holidays that aren't always recognized more broadly. It is a living document, some dates change from year to year, and we hope members of the Biddeford community (and beyond) will feel represented and recognized within it.

January

Poverty Awareness Month: A month-long initiative to raise awareness and call attention to the growth of poverty in America.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 15th): Commemorates the life and work of Dr. King, who was a Baptist minister and prominent leader in the American civil rights movement. It is celebrated on the third Monday of January each year.

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust (January 27th): On this annual day of commemoration, the UN urges every member state to honor the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides.

February

Black History Month: This month was created to focus attention on the contributions of African Americans to the United States. It honors all Black people from all periods of U.S. history, from each enslaved person forcibly brought over from Africa to African Americans living in the United States today.

Lunar New Year (February 10th): Marks the start of the new year in the lunar calendar used in East Asia, Southeast Asia and elsewhere. It begins on the date of the second new Moon after the Winter Solstice, which means that the Lunar New Year can occur anytime between January 21 and February 20. 2024 is the year of the Dragon.

March

International Women's Day (March 8th): This day highlights the political, social, cultural, and economic achievements of women, while also celebrating their achievements, raising awareness about discrimination, and taking action to drive gender parity.

Start of Ramadan (March 10th): The start of Islam's most sacred month — during this time Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until dusk and also involves prayer, self-reflection, and increased devotion. The beginning time of Ramadan is based on the first observance of the new Moon over Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

St. Patrick's Day (March 17th): This day is celebrated by many Irish people and their descendants worldwide, and typically includes a feast to honor Irish heritage.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week (March 18th - 24th): A worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual.

Holi (March 25th): Known as the festival of colors, this day is celebrated in many South Asian countries and across the world (including the U.S.).

Easter (March 30th): Major Christian holiday which celebrates Jesus' resurrection. Easter Sunday always occurs on the first Sunday following the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox.

Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31st): A day to celebrate the lives and contributions of trans people, while also drawing attention to the poverty, discrimination, and violence the community faces.

April

Arab American Heritage Month: Time to recognize the 3.5 million Arab Americans that exemplify so much of what our country stands for: hard work, resilience, compassion, and generosity.

The Week of the Young Child! (April 6th - 12th): A national event promoting the importance of high-quality early learning.

Eid al-Fitr (April 10th): Marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan (the Holiday of Breaking the Fast). Eid is declared after a crescent new moon has been sighted or after completion of thirty days of fasting.

Khmer New Year (April 13th): One of the most significant holidays in Cambodian culture, and celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy, this vibrant festival marks the end of the harvesting season and the beginning of the traditional solar New Year. It is a time for families and communities to come together, honor their ancestors, and welcome the arrival of a prosperous year ahead.

Earth Day (April 22nd): Applauds the planet we live on and all it does for us; Earth Day is observed by more than 192 nations. Earth Day 2024 is unwavering in its commitment to end plastics for the sake of human and planetary health, demanding a 60% reduction in the production of ALL plastics by 2040.

Passover (April 22nd - April 30th): Major Jewish festival that celebrates the freeing of enslaved Israelites from Egypt. The dates are based on the Hebrew calendar, from the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan through the 22nd day.

May^[1]

Asian American and Pacific Island Heritage Month: Celebrates people with Asian and Pacific Island ancestry and their contributions to the United States.

Jewish American Heritage Month: Honors American Jews and their contributions to the United States throughout history.

Older Americans Month: Celebrates how older Americans contribute to the United States.

Military Appreciation Month: A month-long observance in the United States, dedicated to people who are currently serving in the United States military.

Orthodox Easter (May 5th): Each year, in accordance with the Julian calendar, Orthodox Christians worldwide, and about six million in North America, observe Easter, also known as *Pascha*.

June

Caribbean American Heritage Month: Recognizes those of Caribbean descent and the impact their accomplishments have had throughout American history.

Pride Month: Recognizes LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, + like nonbinary and two-spirit) people and the effect they've had on the world. June was selected to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, which were sparked by a police raid on a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York City. This event was a pivotal moment in the LGBTQIA+ rights movement and has been seen as the beginning of the fight for equal rights.

Juneteenth (June 19th): Originally recognized as a federal holiday In 2021, this day commemorates when the last 250,000 enslaved African Americans learned of the Emancipation Proclamation (over two years after it was originally issued). They were then finally declared 'free.'

Summer Solstice (June 20th): The longest day of the year and the shortest night and has been celebrated by various cultures around the world for thousands of years.

July

Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary (July 26th): This landmark law affirmed the inherent dignity of every person, regardless of disability, and falls within the month of Disability Pride. There are an estimated 1 billion people with disabilities world wide, and 15% of whom reside in the U.S. This law and month remind us of the ways we must continue to advance the rights of the disabled community to promote more accessible, equitable, and inclusive societies everywhere.

Ashura (July 17th): This day of religious significance for Shia Muslims falls within the month of Muharram, which is the second holiest month in Islam after Ramadan. During this time, Muslims limit their eating, but it is not considered a full fast, and time is spent sharing stories of sacrifice rather than celebrating. The start of Muharram is the Islam New Year's Day.

August

National Night Out (August 6th): A community-police and safety awareness-raising event in the United States, held the first Tuesday of August.

Day of Arba'in or Arbaeen (Eve of Aug 25th - 26th): In Arabic this translates to forty (i.e. fortieth day). The traditional period of mourning in Islamic culture is forty days and this takes place 40

days after Ashura. Millions of people around the world mark the Day of Arbaeen by remembering the story of Hussain, his family and his companions.

September

National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th - October 15th): Honors Hispanic and Latino Americans for their achievements and contributions to United States culture.

National Recovery Month: Seeks to raise awareness and educate Americans on treatment and health services for individuals affected by addiction, and to exemplify that recovery is possible.

World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10th): Established in 2003 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention in conjunction with the World Health Organization, to reduce the stigma and raise awareness that suicide can be prevented.

October

Rosh Hashanah (October 2nd - 4th): The Jewish New Year when Jews reflect on their faith. It occurs on the first two days of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar.

Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 6th - 12th): Each year, during the first week of October, participants across the country raise awareness of mental illness, fight discrimination and provide support for those living with mental health conditions.

National Coming Out Day (October 11th): Observed on the anniversary of the 1988 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, this international annual awareness day supports LGBTQIA+ people in 'coming out of the closet' (i.e. the process of accepting one's sexual orientation or gender identity and sharing that identity openly with other people).

Indigenous People's Day (October 14th): Celebrates and honors all Indigenous People of North America and commemorates their histories and cultures.

November

Homelessness Awareness Month: Serves to educate the public about the many reasons people are unhoused, and to encourage support for assistance service providers and other service organizations aiming to offer a variety of resources to the unhoused population.

National Native American Heritage Month: Calls attention to the culture, traditions, and achievements of those who are Indigenous to what we now call North America, and their descendents.

Diwali (November 1st): An important celebration in the Hindu faith in which a variety of deities are praised. Diwali occurs annually during the Hindu month of Kartik on the day of the new Moon.

Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20th): Held as a remembrance for all those murdered as a result of transphobia.

December

International Humans Rights Day (December 10th): Adopted by the UN in 1948 following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Winter Solstice/Yule (December 21st): The shortest day of the year and the longest night. / A festival celebrated by those of the Pagan and Wiccan faiths.

Christmas (December 25th): A Christian holiday marking the birth of their Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

Hanukkah (December 25th - January 3rd): A Jewish holiday celebrating Jew rising up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt. It begins on the 25th day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar.

Kwanzaa (December 26th - January 1st): An annual celebration of African American heritage, unity, and culture, often celebrated by Black Americans which was, and still is, inspired by African harvest celebrations. This seven-day holiday honors the seven principles, one celebrated each day.