

## **DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Meeting**

### **Status**

1. Called to order at 5:32 PM.

Present: Andrew Lovley, Breese Reagle, Shelly Gibson, Maura Oakes, Anne Morrissey, Flo Leighton, Danica Lamontagne, Bistra Nikiforova, Syed Zafar, Scott Whiting, Sarai Manyiel

2. Discussion Items

#### **2.1. Approval of Minutes April 8 2024**

A motion was made to approve the April 8 minutes by Scott, Anne seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

#### **2.2. Public Comment Policy**

The group discussed what to do about public comment for the Citizen DEI Committee. Anne recommended that within the published agenda, there will be 5-10 minutes of public comment at the start of each meeting (around 3 minutes per person).

Someone inquired about what other committees do. City Council will offer it a few times during the meeting but not all committees offer it.

Scott shared that if something happened in the moment (i.e. negative/hateful/harmful comments or language, from someone in the public) a motion could be made to suspend comment with a simple vote.

Reminder: public comment would be for offering thoughts/feedback from members of the public but it is not designed to create dialogue between the committee and the community.

Flo suggested within this section of the agenda, the public may also want to comment and share any feedback re: the minutes, past and present. Danica also mentioned that if there were a multitude of people, the committee could extend public comment period to include everyone.

Anne made a motion to include a public comment section in each meeting, at the beginning, with 3 minutes per speaker (15 minutes total, unless the group votes/decides otherwise in the meeting), Breese seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

#### **2.3. Revised Diversity Calendar**

Shelly asked for feedback on the opening paragraph of the calendar and shared finding

conflicting narratives and history on the Day of Prayer, so she had not incorporate that date. The group decided that since the Mayor had just read a Day of Prayer Proclamation, it should be included. Sarai offered some feedback on the opening purpose and the group discussed edits.

The group discussed adding in what Biddeford does to any noteworthy days/events/celebrations, though ultimately decided this will be too cumbersome to update on a regular basis.

In addition to including language that this is a working document, offer for community members to share feedback with the committee if they notice something is missing. It's not an exhaustive list and hopefully offers the things that people value.

Bistra suggested using an end of the year evaluation to look through, edit, and add anything. The Policy committee will likely need to review and approve the revised list given it was approved previously in its first iteration.

The group agreed that Shelly will add language about the Day of Prayer (based on the proclamation), work on the introductory wording, and then share it electronically with the committee. Members can share feedback individually via email, if they desire, so the full list can be approved at the June meeting.

## 2.4. Events in May

Items to be included in the Biddeford Beat:

- Jewish American Heritage Month – May 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Anne worked with the congregation in Biddeford, offered using the write-up in their spring newsletter
- Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders Month – May 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Older Americans Month – May 30<sup>th</sup> deadline

Andrew asked if the committee has to or should approve the language for each of these, particularly if the Citizen DEI Committee logo accompanies the post. The group agreed that those creating each write-up could be trusted to put together the content with Danica and Shelly and they can continue to use the logo.

## 2.5. Pride Month (June) – Planning & Events

Any comments or reflections on the proclamations from June 2023:

Pride:

- Proclamation - change the name of the mayor and date
- Gives statistics about the community, relative to York County, to replace the statistics from 2023

Scott made a motion to approve the existing Pride proclamation with the above edits and Syed seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Biddeford Beat:

- Maura offered to do a write-up of local offerings, resources, and ways folks can access support during the month of June.
- The group requested to have the Beat highlight what's happening on a weekly basis with directions to the comprehensive Heart of Biddeford Pride events list.

Heart of Biddeford could use support from the committee to volunteer; getting folks to go into town after the Pride ceremony at Mechanics Park on June 1<sup>st</sup>, creating and hiding rainbows around downtown / at businesses, etc. Please reach out to Anne and/or Delilah at HoB if you are available.

Juneteenth:

- Proclamation - change the year, mayor name

Syed made a motion to approve the existing Juneteenth proclamation with the above edits and Anne seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

- Black History Walking Tour – perhaps offer this the weekend before or after Juneteenth (potentially June 15<sup>th</sup>)
- Movie screening with McArthur Library
- Potential partnership with the Black Student Union

#### 2.6. Staff DEI Committee - Invitation

The staff committee is interested in having any/all of the citizen committee join them on June 5<sup>th</sup>, at 10am. The staff committee will also be invited to the citizen committee meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

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