

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.