



City of Biddeford
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

May 12, 2025 at 5:30 PM

City Hall Second Floor Conference Room & Zoom

[Join Zoom Meeting Online](#)

Or call in by phone: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 980 6413 8651

Passcode: 917552

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3 Minute Limit Per Speaker
3. Approval of Minutes
3.a April 14 2025 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Discussion Items
 - 4.a Beach Wheelchair Program
 - 4.b Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander Month - Proclamation
 - 4.c Pride Proclamation
 - 4.d Updates
 1. Committee and City websites
 2. Pride
 3. Juneteenth Event
 4. Upcoming calendar events / call for volunteers
 - 4.e Plans for June 17th, Council Presentation
 - 4.f Public Bathrooms - Strategic Planning
5. 2nd Public Comment
6. Adjourn

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – April 14th, 2025 Meeting

Status

1. Called to order by the Chair at 5:32 PM.

Present: Scott Whiting, Shelly Gibson, Danica Lamontagne, Flo Leighton, Syed Zafar, Bistra Nikiforova, Breese Reagle

Absent: Maura Oakes, Ariane Meno Kobo, Anne Morrissey

2. Public Comment (3-minute limit per speaker)

A member of the public from Ward 6 expressed concerns around any name changes to the committee. They said they don't want the committee to proactively change any language based on what is going on elsewhere in the country. They also commented on the skate park and encouraged the committee to be up-to-date and involved with that work, too, and felt it was within the scope of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.a March 10 2025 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes

Syed made a motion to approve the minutes, Scott seconded the motion; the motion passes unanimously.

4. Discussion Items

4.a Upcoming Events (updates)

A Juneteenth celebration will take place on Thursday, June 19th, from around 2pm – 6pm, and potentially into the evening. This work is being done in partnership with the Heart of Biddeford and a few other volunteers. The organizing volunteers are still looking into funding opportunities to support Black artists, musicians, restaurants, etc. with an honorarium, so please reach out to Flo if you have any ideas or suggestions for this.

At the May 12th committee meeting, Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition (CHCC) will be joining everyone to discuss projects and programs offered in and around the City of Biddeford.

Potential events and dates for Pride were discussed, though no one on the committee has been able to attend planning meetings. The proposed date and time for the flag raising (with the committee and City staff) is for Monday, June 1st, around lunchtime.

4.b Strategic Project Updates (Public Bathrooms)

Flo shared an update from Saco and the Kennebunks, reporting that most bathrooms can be found on Google Maps, and a few include accessible parking.

Shelly shared that Westbrook doesn't currently have any year-round public bathrooms maintained by the City but was guided towards some folks that might be able to talk more about planning. Portland organizers created a strategic plan for public bathrooms, work that was done in earnest across the community in 2024. This approach, largely initiated by the tourism/downtown sector, highlighted public bathrooms as both a basic human right, and one that impacts a variety of people (elderly, children, unhoused, etc.). She didn't hear back from her contact in Lewiston.

Flo suggested a community survey/poll to engage members of the Biddeford community in this discussion. It was recommended to review the committee's previous work, the 'Best Practices for Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Community Engagement; document for ideas and guidance. It was discussed broadly to consider offering a proposal or recommendations to the City for public bathrooms, with collaboration and support from key stakeholders, community members and businesses.

Danica shared that the committee's resource list, created a couple of months ago, has clearance to be added to the committee's website by the Acting City Manager. If the committee is trying to prepare a larger statement to advertise the website, the Acting City Manager would like to read through and approve the language.

It was suggested to add public bathrooms as a line item on the Biddeford Resource List (Google doc) and consider cross checking it with additional items on the committee's resource list. Shelly agreed to share that list with the committee and make some suggested additions. Danica will also upload the resource list the committee created to the committee's website, and everyone can re-visit in May to see if any changes need to be made.

4.c Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Month Proclamation (draft to be written)

Syed volunteered to draft it and Bistra offered to write something for Older Americans Month, to be added to the Biddeford Beat in May. Students from the multicultural student union (MSU) are interested in joining the Mayor's reading of the AANHPI proclamation in May. Shelly reminded folks that the Mayor often likes to invite and include members of the committee to join a picture, so it felt important for folks to know that ahead of time, and that it's okay to say if you don't want to be in the picture.

4.d June Presentation (planning)

On Tuesday, June 17th, the committee will be presenting to the Council; hopefully all committee members can attend! The committee brainstormed some ideas for what to share:

- Finalized Proclamation Tree
- Flag Policy (re-revised, updated, and approved)
- Best Practices for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Community Engagement (document)
- Personal stories about group members feeling included, represented, and valued

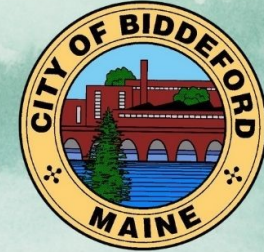
- What plans and projects the committee has (past, present, and future)
- Number of proclamations?
- Number of Biddeford Beat submissions
- Events where the committee was present

Shelly will create a PowerPoint to be shared on One Drive/Teams, and members can add pertinent info, as well as volunteer to join Flo in presenting.

Bistra let the group know she tried twice to attend Rec Commission meetings but both meetings got rescheduled. The committee agreed that it would be best to wait until the Commission had a quorum and some projects underway before potentially building a broader partnership on anything.

5. Meeting Adjourned at 7:00PM.

DID YOU KNOW?



Biddeford provides a free Beach Wheelchair Program to enhance beach accessibility for all. Located at Gilbert R. Boucher Memorial Park (1 Beach House Lane), the beach features an accessible mobi-mat path. **The wheelchair can be reserved at no cost from June 15 to August 31, 2025.**

How to Reserve:

Office: at the Recreation Department Office: 189 Alfred Street, Biddeford

Online: www.biddefordrec.com

Call: Biddeford Recreation Department at (207) 283 - 0841

Office Hours: Monday–Thursday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Reservation Times Available:

AM: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

PM: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM



Want a full day of fun? Just add both AM and PM slots to your cart for your chosen date. Book in advance online or on-site by scanning the QR code in the parking area. Same-day reservations might be available if the beach wheelchair hasn't been claimed yet.

Whereas, the month of May is nationally recognized as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month, honoring the heritage, achievements, and cultural contributions of AANHPI communities across the United States; and

Whereas, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders represent a vibrant and growing part of Maine's population. Approximately 1.5% of Maine's population identifies as Asian American or Pacific Islander, with Biddeford itself home to a steadily increasing number of families from AANHPI backgrounds; and

Whereas, AANHPI communities have enriched every facet of American society from arts and sciences to education, business, public service, and continue to play a vital role in shaping our collective future; and

Whereas, cultures celebrated under the AANHPI umbrella include peoples from more than 75 countries across the Asian continent including East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, as well as the Pacific Islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia; and

Whereas, the City of Biddeford is committed to recognizing and celebrating the diverse heritage of all its residents and fostering a welcoming, inclusive community for all.

Therefore, I, Martin Grohman, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, do hereby proclaim May 2025 as **Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month** in the City of Biddeford and encourage residents to learn more about and celebrate the history, culture, and contributions of AANHPI communities both locally and nationally.

City of Biddeford



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the City of Biddeford is committed to being a safe and equitable community for all people, and that commitment extends to any race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, country of origin, religion or any other identity; and

WHEREAS, the events of June 28, 1969, now known as The Stonewall Riots, sparked the LGBTQ+ rights movement in the United States and, since then, Pride celebrations and civil demonstrations every June have commemorated this historic turning point; and

WHEREAS, this movement has achieved historic progress in many areas including anti-bullying and hate crime legislation, and great advances in family and marriage equality; and

WHEREAS, the people of Maine voted to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in 2005 and in favor of marriage equality in 2012; and

WHEREAS, yet, despite years of progress, members of the LGBTQ+ community still face unacceptable levels of discrimination, violence, and proposed rollbacks in state and federal protections; and

WHEREAS, the LGBTQ+ community still face unemployment, homelessness and poverty at greater levels than the general population; and

WHEREAS, according to the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey in 2023, more than twenty percent of York County's middle and high school youth identified as LGBTQ+, and the prevalence of suicidal ideation among LGBTQ+ youth is alarmingly high; and

WHEREAS, public symbols of support for LGBTQ+ life can make life-long, lasting positive impacts on members of the community who otherwise feel isolated and alone; and, let it be known that the City of Biddeford stands with the LGBTQ+ community in their desire for & right to equality, dignity, respect, and fair treatment for all;

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that I, Martin Grohman, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, do hereby proclaim June as Pride Month in Biddeford and encourage all residents to show support for LGBTQ+ community and to participate in our various Pride Month activities.

In Witness Whereof, We the undersigned have herewith affixed our signatures this 3rd day of June 2025.

Mayor

City Clerk