

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes – December 9th, 2024 Meeting

Status

1. Called to order by the Chair at 5:37 PM.

Present (via Zoom): Breese Reagle, Flo Leighton, Shelly Gibson, Danica Lamontagne, Anne Morrissey, Syed Zafar, Sarai Manyiel, Bistra Nikiforova, Maura Oakes, Ariane Meno Kobo

Absent: Scott Whiting

2. Public Comment (3 minute limit per speaker)

No one from the public was present for comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.a November 4 2024 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Maura, Breese seconded the motion; the motion passes unanimously.

4. Discussion Items

- 4.a United Way of Southern Maine – Presentation

Ninette Irabaruta, Tanner Skilton, and Ellen Agnew presented information about ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) and how the United Way of Southern Maine is supporting the Biddeford community and York County more broadly. The committee asked questions about how to support their work and shared some of the networks they are connected to in/around the City.

- 4.b Tech Updates

Danica shared that the City is rolling out an agenda portal that's connected to personal email addresses. As such, committee members should be getting a personal email that states when the agenda is live. No one on the committee seemed to have received this email, so Danica asked that everyone send their personal email address to her so she can add it moving forward.

A reminder to all committee members to be diligent with checking who is sending emails, especially if they are from elected officials. A lot of junk mail is coming to anyone with a biddefordmaine.org email, sometimes looking legitimate and that it's coming from the City Manager or Mayor. Please feel free to report anything as 'junk' that seems suspicious or forward it to helpdesk@biddefordmaine.org and it will go directly to the IT department for review.

With the 360 migration, the committee now has the ability to access shared documents. Shelly created a Microsoft Team (labeled Citizen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee), so members will need to download the Microsoft Teams app (on their

phone or computer) and will be able to see all previous documents/publications the committee has used in the past few years.

Ultimately, EVERYONE should have consistent access to their Biddeford email. If this is not the case, please reach out to Shelly ASAP so we can get it sorted.

4.c December Holidays – Proclamation

Flo shared the proclamation she edited and updated for the December 17th council meeting. Bistra made a motion to approve the proclamation as written, Maura seconded, the motion passes unanimously.

4.d Meeting Updates

- Flo gave a summary of her meeting with the Mayor regarding the Proclamation Tree (Danica and Shelly also joined). Largely, he was supportive of the way decisions were made by the committee regarding proclamations, and also asked follow up questions/gave suggestions about how the committee can support the community. In light of recent events, he recommended the group make themselves present in spaces and at events to show how they support the community and certain members who are not feeling included or particularly welcome right now. This may continue to be a feeling that grows for some, particularly as times feel unknown in the months / years ahead.
- Shelly & Danica gave a summary of their meeting at the Rec Department, with the Director and Deputy Director. Currently, the department is working to get fully staffed before they can invest more time in events and celebrations, but did share that the Rec Commission might be open to partnering on a variety of things. They also shared 3 of their biggest barriers when it comes to programming: transportation, cost/economics, and language. A few suggestions were made by the committee about to engage further:
 - Amplify job postings and share with your networks
 - Invite members of the Rec Commission to join a DEI committee meeting (perhaps early in 2025)
 - Consider solutions to challenges around transportation, economics, and language

4.e Goals & Upcoming Events

- Anne shared an update about the ad-hoc committee and repurposing of the JFK building. The last meeting was cancelled but if the committee and community members have thoughts about the use of that space, they are encouraged to keep an eye out for when the next meeting is scheduled and/or the proposal is released. There have been a few suggestions on use, including childcare, housing, and the Rec department, and sharing feedback and/or speaking out at a council meeting (in terms of appropriateness for the City and the community) is a vital way to stay involved.
- Dates for meetings in 2025

- The committee will talk through all the meeting dates in 2025 at the January meeting (January 13th, 5:30pm).
- Winterfest would be a great place to have a table, volunteer, give out stickers, etc. Please hold this timing on your calendars:
 - Saturday, February 8th, 10am – 3pm
 - Danica is on the planning committee and will liaise between that group and the DEI committee on details.
- The December holidays proclamation the group just approved, if agreed to by the Mayor, will be read on Tuesday, 12/17, at 6pm.
 - Anne will likely be able to join via zoom, and potentially in person.
 - Ariane is going to check her schedule and see if she can attend.
- If we can approve an MLK proclamation at the January 13th meeting, it will likely be able to be put on the agenda for the January 21st Council meeting.
- Breese agreed to look through and edit last year's document.

5. Meeting Adjourned at 6:57 PM.