

Meeting Minutes
Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee
Monday, September 13, 2021
6pm-8pm

Members Present: Dovie King (Chair), Karen Blumenfeld, Janot Mendler de Suarez, Steve Wynne, Jessica Schendel, Heather Pineault, Yamini Ranjan, Ingrid Palacios, Yauwu Tang, Jenny Levine, Isabel Xue, Kathleen Buckley, Jane Sciacca (taking minutes)

Members Not Present: Richard Lee, Adrienne Correia, Isabella Donovan, Kylie Byrne

1. **Call to Order:** Isabel made the preliminary meeting statement and Dovie called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Statement from the Chair and Discussion Regarding Group Dynamics and Basic Respect of all Members of the Committee and any Attendee:** Dovie King read a statement that she prepared regarding respect for diversity of opinion, pointing to the last HRDEIC meeting which was difficult. Dovie, Karen, Jenny and Ingrid expressed concerns about the last meeting and the idea of moving forward in unity. Dovie received many complimentary remarks about her statement and was thanked by members for her leadership.
4. **Discussion of Intake Procedures, Protocols and Reporting of Public Inquiries and Phone Calls:** Members discussed the launch of a phone intake line for the public to contact the HRDEIC with complaints about discrimination and/or seek assistance. It was agreed that the launch date for the phone line would be October 1, 2021. Steve volunteered to work with Dovie to draft a press release regarding the launch of the phone line. Dovie said she would cover monitoring and responding to any calls for the month of October, but that the task would be assigned to different committee members in coming months. There was much discussion about protecting callers' confidentiality and identities. Kathleen said she would check with Town Counsel to ensure callers' identities would be kept confidential and not subject to the Public Records Act. Dovie volunteered to record an introductory voice message in English that will instruct callers that their identities will be protected. In addition to recording the message in English, Yauwu offered to translate the message in Mandarin/Chinese, Ingrid in Spanish and Janot to get a Portuguese translation. Jenny brought up the possibility of members responding to callers according to their individual expertise on a specific issue. There was consensus about this. Janot agreed to contact Sudbury's Human Rights committee for information on their system for record keeping.
5. **Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 30, 2021:** The minutes of August 30, 2021, were unanimously approved at 6:50pm upon a motion made by Heather that was seconded by Dovie. All members present voted in favor with abstentions from Janot, Ingrid and Jenny.
6. **Cultural Council Grant Application Discussion and Possible Vote:** Yamini raised the issue of the committee that we apply for two grant opportunities, the festival grant and cultural council grant, to fund local diversity events. Yamini said she had spoken to the Wayland Cultural Council chair, Rachel Sideman-Kurtz, who encouraged the committee to apply for both grants. Having experience in this area, Jane offered to work together with Yamini on the task. A motion was made

by Dovie and seconded by Yauwu to authorize Yamini and Jane to submit both grant applications. The motion passed unanimously. The grant application deadlines are Oct. 15 for the cultural council grant and November 3 for the festivals grant.

7. **Discussion Recognizing Upcoming Cultural Heritage and Diversity Holidays:** Dovie proposed that the HRDEIC commemorate diversity and cultural heritage holidays as part of its regular activities. The committee discussed doing so for the upcoming Hispanic Heritage Month, Indigenous People's Day and Native American Heritage Month. Ingrid shared that she will be a speaker at the Our Wayland Community Conversation event sponsored by the Town Administrator for Hispanic Heritage Month on September 19, 2021, from 4pm-6pm. Dovie suggested the HRDEIC co-sponsor local events such as the one Ingrid is speaking at in the future. The group also discussed making public statements that are inclusive and educational in nature with the goal of raising public awareness rather than raising controversy. Jenny proposed complementing holiday celebrations organized by the town Racial Justice events group, by combining public statements with action items, such as sponsoring a fundraiser benefiting local organizations or diverse groups, which many others supported as a good long-term goal. Members then discussed various platforms for posting announcements, including local newspapers, the town website, banners and signs, and social media. Isabel said that she would be able to help manage social media starting in January and Yauwu said that he can help. A motion was made by Dovie and seconded by Karen for the HRDEIC to draft public statements for Hispanic Heritage Month, Indigenous People's Day and Native American Heritage Month and to disseminate them in the community. The motion passed unanimously. Dovie proposed to look at drafts in the next meeting.
8. **Domestic Violence Awareness Month:** Dovie proposed that this topic be tabled until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the HRDEIC in order to have a fuller discussion. The members agreed.
9. **Discussion on Community Policing and Police Chief Search:** Dovie proposed that this topic be tabled until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the HRDEIC in order to invite speakers and have a fuller discussion. The members agreed.
10. **Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance, if any:** None.
11. **Announcements:** Dovie shared that Emerge Massachusetts is hosting an event honoring her and other women of color in public service at an event in Newton on September 28, 2021. The event is open to the public.
12. **Next meeting Date(s):** The committee discussed options for a standing meeting time. Dovie made a motion, seconded by Ingrid, that it would be the third Wednesday from 6pm-8pm for the next few months; the motion passed unanimously, so the next scheduled meetings will be October 20, November 17 and December 15. The meetings will all be remote and the time may be adjusted in the future.
13. **Adjourn:** Karen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Isabel. All members present voted in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm.

Message from the HRDEI Committee Chair, Dovie King

September 13, 2021

As the Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, we are uniquely positioned to be the vehicle through which our community speaks for all people regardless of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, immigration status and other personal traits. Our community looks to us to set an example for unity and cooperation. The essence of unity is respect for diversity of opinion, even when there is disagreement. As a basic ground rule, we must show respect for one another, particularly during this critical time as we face the COVID pandemic, with all of the challenges that it presents.

It is imperative that we be mindful of the type of meeting space we are creating, and that we ensure it is a safe one so all participants feel comfortable to fully engage. This underscores the importance of the Group Norms we discussed at prior meetings and ratified by majority vote. Together, we created Group Norms to provide a basis for holding ourselves accountable to one another. Let's use our Group Norms to guide the way we work together. Step one is for each of us to recognize our own privilege and how this may open doors for us while making life harder for others. Examples include not only white privilege, but also male privilege, heterosexual privilege, economic privilege, etc.

Our unity will assure the strengthening of the Committee.

During a portion of our last Committee meeting, I was struck by the negative tone, which I would characterize as needlessly aggressive and adversarial, and lacking in unity, camaraderie and civility. This type of behavior is contrary to our mission and purpose, contrary to our Group Norms, and a poor representation to the general public of who we are and what we stand for. We must remember the importance of working together in order to achieve common goals. Keep in mind that we are all here to make positive changes so that those who are voiceless and marginalized in our community have the same opportunity to be visible and included as those of us who are not. We are here to promote greater understanding and acceptance within Wayland.

On a related note, as Chair of the HRDEI Committee, I am responsible for leading our meetings and making sure there is an equal opportunity for participation. Therefore, I intend to institute time limits, if necessary, to ensure we stay on topic and no one person is dominating the discussion. It is also my role and responsibility to shut down discussions that are disruptive, repetitive, discourteous and combative.

Similarly, it is my responsibility to set the meeting agenda. I welcome input and ideas for agenda items from all of you, but it is within my discretion to finalize the agenda. Thus, I will sometimes need to prioritize some topics over others if there are time-sensitive issues, for example. I will use my judgment to do what is best, keeping in mind that we are a newly formed group and need time to establish basic protocols. Please note that agendas are required to be publicly posted 48 hours in advance of our meetings, and this does not include Saturdays, Sundays or holidays, so it is best to email me well in advance of a meeting if you want to propose an agenda item. My email is dking@wayland.ma.us.

Further, when using your town email, you should be mindful of Open Meeting Laws. Committee discussions should be happening at regularly scheduled and publicly noticed meetings, not through side group conversations via private email, text or phone. Therefore, please refrain from replying “all” on email. I recently attended a refresher course offered by the MA Attorney General’s Office on Open Meeting Laws, and I encourage you to do the same to learn more about this topic. When in doubt, feel free to email me individually or Kathleen, but not the entire group.

Finally, there will be times when some of us cannot attend a meeting due to a conflict, illness, etc. All of our meetings are available for viewing on-line at WayCam and I encourage you to get caught-up by watching videos of any missed meetings. This will help us avoid re-hashing issues already discussed in the past. In the interest of time, and given our full agendas, we cannot afford to get into that habit. Therefore, let’s refrain from deviating from the agenda at hand.

As your Committee Chair, I want to thank you for entrusting me with the important task of leading the group. I am committed to being fair, open and responsive to each of you and members of the public. I now open the floor for discussion in case anyone wants to share their thoughts about this statement.