

Meeting Minutes | Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HRDEIC)

April 18, 2023 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Members present via Zoom: Yamini Ranjan (Chair), Eunjee Kang, Janot Mendler de Suarez, Heather Pineault, Yauwu Tang, Jessica Schendel, Clerk (taking notes), John Bugbee (Assistant Town Manager).

Members absent: Chloe Voight, Kanmani Sekhar, Mei-Ling Ellerman, Carlin Gruber

1. Call to Order: Yamini took a roll call to verify a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm. Yamini read the Indigenous Land Acknowledgment.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Town Manager introduction and Assistant Town Manager updates: (6:09) Michael McCall, the new Town Manager was on leave. With regard to the multicultural festival, John explained that the Select Board is responsible for accepting and spending funds on behalf of the HRDEIC. They will need to vote at next Monday's meeting to accept the Mass. Cultural Council grant. They will also have to create a separate fund for other donations. Questions were raised about reimbursements for money already spent on the festival. John will help facilitate these payments, which usually take about 30 days. Janot suggested there be a Treasurer for the donations account to track in and out payments. All expenditures should define which account they are being drawn from. It is important for grant money to be spent on the items listed in the application and some private donations are there to support specific performers. Janot said there would need to be cash on hand on the day of the festival to pay performers. John will find out how to achieve this.

4. Review and possible vote to approve March 21 meeting minutes: (6:24) Noting one typo correction, Heather proposed the minutes be approved, Jessica seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Discuss 4/11/23 racist incident in Town and how we can address racism proactively, support accountability, and help individuals who have been subjected to racism: Yamini reported that the committee had been given permission to discuss an incident in which a Black resident was sitting in her car outside her house when confronted by her neighbor, who threatened to call the police on her. The complainant's son tried unsuccessfully to stop her, reminding her that that the woman lives there. Yamini feels there needs to be more awareness of such incidents in the Town. Heather said that the reporting line should help us to track the frequency of incidents, which we can share with the public. Yamini feels the Town needs safe spaces where people can feel comfortable discussing such incidents. Suggestions included a mothers' group, online group, coffee meet, workshop for white people challenging racism, etc. Yauwu pointed out these incidents are often prompted by deep-seated fear. Janot thinks the Town equity assessment will be helpful and we need to consolidate information about incidents reported to the schools, the police and the HRDEIC. Shared information will help drive appropriate responses. Wayland Diversity Network is no longer in existence but Heather suggested we put out a call on social media to see if people would be interested in being part of a group involved in combatting racism in the community and/or providing individual support to people seeking a safe place to discuss incidents.

6. Committee updates:

- a) **Reporting line:** (6:47) Mike McCall is currently learning about this and John concedes that 4 changes in Town administration since the inception of the HRDEIC has led to many delays in starting the line. The main issue under review is the legal questions around confidentiality, particularly vis à vis Open Meeting Law. John was thanked for his ongoing support on this.
- b) **Multicultural festival:** (6:53) Janot reported on progress. Promises of in-kind donations have been received, including from Jindu restaurant. The Town Manager's office has put the committee in

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touch with the Town's PR firm, Gilfoil. There will be 3 students MCs for the event. The school Facilities Director is helping with physical arrangements. Yauwu reported that many performances are lined up, representing different cultures - musicians, dancers, ethnic dress fashion show, etc. Janot reported on the opening ceremony and hopes to have a native American read the land acknowledgement. Attendees will be welcomed in different languages. The Town Manager will introduce local politicians. There will be display tables for community groups, Town departments, METCO, etc. Town emergency services will participate. We agreed to have an HRDEIC table to publicize our work and invite people to volunteer for a 'Friends of HRDEIC group'.

c) **Community conversation on Race Amity:** (7:12) Janot reported that the date and venue are still to be determined.

d) **Meetings with HRDEIC/School counterparts; and possible vote on whether to recommend to**

Select Board a unified School/Town cultural holiday calendar: (7:13) Heather asked if everyone would take a look at the high school holiday calendar that was circulated and let her know if they have anything to add.

e) **DOJ Community Relations Service SPIRIT Program for the Town of Wayland:**(7:15)) Yamini thanked Karen *in absentia* for the information she has provided on the SPIRIT Program and equity assessments. Our participation in the Spirit Program will probably take place over 1 or 2 days in September.

f) **Stopping Stones project.** (7:17) Kanmani and Janot are working with Jane Sciacca on this project to bring to light the history about slaves held within Wayland, as well as places significant to the indigenous community.

g) **April 4th HRDEIC Great Presenters library presentation:** (7:19) Yamini was grateful for the opportunity to share information about the work of our committee and Jessica said that she thought Yamini and Karen gave an excellent presentation, which was followed by good questions from in-person and online attendees. Yamini publicly thanked the Select Board for their support.

h) **Discussion and possible vote to approve land acknowledgement handout for Annual Town Meeting, with guest Mary Ann Borkowski:** (7:24) Yamini announced that the land acknowledgement will be read out with article 27 at the Town Meeting.. Mary Ann spoke to the handout that was distributed. Firstly there are references for further learning; secondly guides for reflection, such as 21-day challenges; thirdly ideas for action. The handout will be available at the Town Meeting, and will include the QR code, which Yauwu created. The QR code takes one to our website. John will check whether we can print 300 copies at Town Hall. We will create an enlarged copy of the QR code and put it up on an easel. Heather proposed a motion to approve the land acknowledgment handout for Annual Town Meeting and that if necessary, Mary Ann Borkowski will be reimbursed for any costs from the Lauren Dunne Astley grant fund. Janot seconded and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. We hope the Land Acknowledgement will be part of Annual Town Meeting in the future.

7. Announcements: (7:50) Heather announced that Debbie Irving (listed in the Land Acknowledgement resources) has other 21-day challenges which are helpful. Yamini announced there will be a special meeting on May 15 for HRDEIC at the Police Department with Acting Police Chief Ed Berman when we will meet the new Civil Rights Officer and others.

9. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance:

There were none.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2023, 6:00 pm

10. Adjourn: Yauwu moved to adjourn, Heather seconded and the motion passed unanimously.