

Civil Rights Committee Workshop Minutes
Thursday, November 12, 2020, at 7:15 PM

DRAFT

As a result of the COVID-19 virus, the Civil Rights Committee conducted the meeting via Zoom remote access as provided by Maine law. Zoom allowed all Civil Rights Committee members and members of the public to hear all discussion as required by law.

Present: : Valerie Deveraux, Keyla Alston-Griffin, Dheeraj Khare, Miriam Esch Levanos, Kimberly Monaghan, Paul Seidman, Jim Sparks, Melanie Thomas, Rafina Young, Rachel Davis (Director, Thomas Memorial Library)

Absent:

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m.
2. Recap of definitions and Town list:
 - a. The Committee discussed Rafina's "Structural Terminology" document. There was some discussion of the term "white privilege," and whether some feel the term is offensive. This led to a discussion of what our role as a committee is--are we introducing policy to the town, and thus being sensitive to potential reactions, or is our purpose more educational? In a later discussion, Paul pointed out that one of the ways that white supremacy is maintained is by white people NOT talking about racism. He also said he often uses the term "structural advantage," but also pointed out that there are lots of ways of approaching issues, and advocated for including those different avenues.
 - b. The Committee then reviewed and discussed the charge. There was discussion about the Committee giving a report to the Town by the end of the year about whether we believe the Committee should continue to exist. Valerie advised that the Town Council is looking for movement, and the goal would be to develop a charge for Committee as a standing, not ad hoc committee. Within three months, the Committee should develop a charge; recommendations can be made later, but immediate concerns can be identified.
 - c. It was suggested that the Committee choose several departments to focus on as areas for potential recommendations. There was discussion of applying Rafina's framework to the departments we choose to focus on. Departments identified were:
 - i. Assessing

- ii. Community Services
 - iii. Planning
 - iv. Police
 - v. Library
 - vi. Personnel
3. Sharing stories: There was some discussion of providing a way for people in our community to share their stories in an easily accessible way--the stories from the student-led demonstration were very powerful. Keyla suggested engaging the Telling Room and building a storytelling archive. Melanie suggested that we could have storytelling opportunities to mark various special days, such as Juneteenth.
 4. Brief discussion of Town policies: There was an initial discussion of some of the policies that have been gathered so far, specifically the Town's Personnel Code and some problematic language.
 5. New Business:
 - a. Melanie suggested working with Mimi to write to the principals of the CEMS and CEHS to recruit another student to the Committee. Mimi agreed.
 - b. Approval of minutes from the October meeting and workshop
 - i. Paul motioned to accept the minutes; seconded by Melanie; unanimously approved.
 - c. Rachel Talbott-Ross invitation: Kim reported that there is no date yet for Rachel Talbott-Ross to speak to the Committee
 - d. Question about transportation in Cape Elizabeth--what department would buses fall under? This led to a suggestion that the Committee look at the Comprehensive Plan, as well as look at the work of the Ordinance Committee.
 6. How to proceed: Rafina suggested that we tackle the easiest departments to address first; Jim suggested maybe the reverse. It was suggested that the biggest departments are Planning and Police.
 7. Next meeting: We will discuss what departments we will focus on , develop a “plan of attack” and discuss what we will include in our charge for a standing committee.
 - a. Dheeraj suggested that we look at what kind of training exists in various departments already; Valerie offered to look into information on that subject
 8. Next meeting: Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, December 2 at 6:45 p.m.**
 - a. Subsequent meeting schedule:
 - i. Thursday, December 17 at 7:15 p.m.
 - ii. Wednesday, December 30 at 6:45 p.m.
 9. Motion to adjourn by Jim; seconded by Paul. Workshop adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rachel Davis, 11/25/20