Civil Rights Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 @ 6:45 p.m.

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: : Keyla Alston-Griffin, Dheeraj Khare, Kim Monaghan, Jim Sparks, Melanie Thomas, Rafina Young, Rachel Davis (Director, Thomas Memorial Library, Committee Secretary)

Absent: Miriam Esch Levanos

1. Welcome and Call the Meeting to Order: Melanie called to order at 6:47 p.m.
2. Acceptance of minutes from the February 24 workshop: Keyla made a motion to to accept the minutes as written; seconded by Jim; unanimously approved.
3. Citizen Comments of items not on the agenda: none
4. Presentation discussion: The Committee’s presentation was delayed until the April meeting due to a full Town Council agenda and extensive discussion of some of the other agenda items. Keyla expressed appreciation for the work of the Town Council and for Valerie’s commitment to the Town via her Town Council service. The Committee’s presentation, as a tabled item, will have priority on the agenda for the
5. Next steps: There was discussion of how to proceed with the examination of policies, which policies to begin with, and what process the Committee should use. There was also discussion of how the Committee should work with Town Departments, such as the library and Community Services, that have advisory committees.
   1. ACTION ITEM: the Committee chairs will reach out to Town Manager for clarity on the procedure for the process regarding cepartments that have advisory committees
   2. After some discussion about which department policies should be examined first, Melanie made a motion to for the Committee to begin by examining the Personnel Code; seconded by Jim; approved in a five to one vote in favor:
      1. Keyla: yes
      2. Dheeraj: yes
      3. Kim: yes
      4. Jim: yes
      5. Melanie: yes
      6. Rafina: no
   3. ACTION ITEM: Committee members should read and review the Personnel Code prior to the next meeting
   4. ACTION ITEM: Rachel will continue to gather the policies from other departments and put them in a shared Google folder for future review
6. Meeting schedule: The Committee discussed different working methodologies and meeting schedules going forward. Some desired a clear focus on policy review, others suggested either scheduling some meetings to focus on outreach and community engagement, and others focused on policy review, or possibly reserving a portion of each meeting for outreach and community engagement, with the majority of the time devoted to policy review. There was also discussion about whether to continue to meet every other week, or to meet monthly instead, or to reduce the duration of the meetings. Valerie expressed that she was impressed by the commitment of this committee, and acknowledged that no other committees meet as often and consistently as this one dones.
   1. Kelya made a motion to table a decision on the meeting schedule until after the Committee completes its review of the Personnel Code to better see what our process is and how we can best work moving forward; seconded by Melanie; unanimously approved.
7. Next meeting: March 24 at 6:45 p.m.
8. Other Business:
   1. Kim reported that she will reach out again to Rachel Talbott Ross to see if she can speak with the committee as previously planned
   2. Dheerah asked about whether the open position on the committee would be filled; Melanie reported that she has spoken with the Town Manager about the open position and it was agreed that there was no hurry to fill the position while the Committee remains an ad hoc committee
   3. A meeting on the affordable housing development at the Town Center was happening at the same time as the Committee meeting; Keyla pointed out the impact on students of color, and how many in Town tend to confuse racial diversity and socioeconomic diversity, and that is an area where the Committee might provide some support.
   4. Keyla asked committee members to share what they feel worked well in tonight’s meeting; the sharing of many points of view, and the feeling of working productively as a group was expressed by everyone as appreciated and valued.
9. Citizen Comments of items not on the agenda: none
10. Adjourn: Keyla made a motion to adjourn the workshop; seconded by Jim; unanimously approved. Workshop adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rachel Davis, 3/2/21