

Civil Rights Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

6:45 p.m.

APPROVED

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, Kim Monaghan, Paul Seidman, Jim Sparks, Melanie Thomas, Rafina Young, Rachel Davis (Director, Thomas Memorial Library, Committee Secretary)

Absent: none

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.
2. Acceptance of minutes with typos noted by Paul corrected: Motion by Rafina, seconded by Kim, approved unanimously
3. Citizen Comments of items not on the agenda (15 minute limit): none
4. Discussion of what Town departments we will focus on
 - a. There was some discussion about confusion about the Committee's deadline. Valerie clarified Town Council expectations: the Committee should provide an update to the Town Council after three months, but the work of the Committee continues for a full year. Rather than an initial written report, the Committee could make a presentation to the Town Council detailing what we've discussed and we plan to focus on.
 - b. The two departments identified as the most daunting were Police and Planning; Valerie suggested that maybe we should address Personnel first since some work has already been done by Paul on that. The Town Manager could possibly forward our recommendations to the Town Attorney, and the Committee could continue to work on other items while that is being reviewed.
 - c. Keyla wondered if we could develop a "plan of attack" for our work before jumping into any particular item. There was discussion of the terminology we want to settle on using throughout with an eye toward developing a common language.

- d. Jim identified two different tracks facing the Committee: broader, more radical change, versus local change, i.e., how do we make Cape Elizabeth a place where there is more equity?
 - e. There was discussion about what framework we will use to look at Town departments; Keyla suggested we build an outline, present that to the Town Council, and then get to work looking at each department using that outline; Rafina suggested we use a SWOT analysis, identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats; Rafina's experiences from HR could be applied to our task, identifying focal points within each department and looking at their impact on the Town and how they might be harmful, and how they might be changed
 - f. Jim pointed out that some needed changes come more from the culture of the Town than its policies. There was a brief discussion of finding a way to take the "pulse of the Town," returning to the idea of conducting a survey
 - g. Keyla made a motion to include all the Town departments identified at our last meeting in our framework going forward, noting that we can articulate the "hows and whys" for each department later. Jim seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
 - h. Develop a plan for examining department policies: Rafina agreed to present a draft plan for a framework at our next workshop; Paul agreed to work with her. Rafina shared some documents that could be useful for all to read for our next meeting.
5. Discussion of charge for a standing committee: Keyla made a motion to table this item and move to new business; seconded by Melanie; unanimously approved.
6. New business:
- a. Valerie brought up the idea of creating a web page for the Committee that would be a tab on the Town website; it would be a place where citizens could find information about not just the Committee's work, but civil rights issues and how they are being addressed in our Town, with links to trainings, resources, and our glossary. Keyla suggested that maybe this is something we could use our budget for; this could be an action item for the Committee for the future.
 - b. Paul asked if we could use Word documents instead of PDFs for meeting documents with links because links are hard to access in PDFs; Rachel said she would provide those documents in that format going forward.
 - c. Dates for upcoming meetings:
 - i. December 17 at 7:15 p.m. (workshop)
 - ii. December 30 at 6:45 p.m.
 - iii. January 13 at 6:45 p.m.
 - iv. January 27 at 6:45 p.m.

- d. The Committee discussed making a plan to present our work so far to the Town Council at their meeting on February 8 at 7:00 p.m.
7. Citizen Comments of items not on the agenda (15 minute limit): none
8. Adjourn: Melanie made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Paul; unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rachel Davis, 12/10/20