

Minutes of SHARON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 12, 2023 — 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. 7:03 p.m. Attendance Present: Toben Asklar, Lajos Kamocsay, Shelley Keimach, Alison Kellom, Bill Kondrath, Wenxiao Tiano.

Toben began with a statement saying that they were holding in their heart the Sharon Jewish Community, and Israeli friends and strangers, who bore the horrific and murderous slaughter by Hamas terrorists on Saturday and their aftermath.

2. 7:04 p.m. I did not receive any Email Correspondence from Marjorie Mitlin. So we will hold that until next meeting.

3. 7:10 p.m. Approval of notes from September 14, 2023, DEIC meeting Moved by Shelley and seconded by Lajos Kamocsay. Unanimously approved.

4. 7:12 p.m. DEI trainings status and launch

Bill Kondrath has been in touch with both Fred Turkington and Kiana Pierre-Louis and the contract will be signed soon. Bill asked that members of the DEIC be sure to take the training (implicit bias and microaggressions) when it is available. Kiana said that the select board was in favor of SunShower and that she will be in touch with Fred.

5. 7:18 p.m. Indigenous Peoples' Day Sharon observance events October 9, 2023: post-event discussion

There were about 75 people at the event at the UUA congregation. Great attendance, especially given the support Israel rally in Boston at the same time. Thanks to Rev. Jolie Olivetti for hosting this event. Thanks to Kim Hokanson for being the Zoom monitor. Darius Coombs was the speaker. Thomas Green may be available for next year. He had some concerns about accuracy of the land recognition wording. The committee discussed wording for land recognition. Thanks to the Sharon Racial Equity Alliance for publicity. Shelley offered to write thank you notes to people who worked on the event. Sharon TV was at the event. Cost \$592 (fee and milage).

6. 7:26 p.m. Support Statement to School Committee open forum: follow up/discussion. The statement was appreciated by the SC.

7. 7:28 p.m. Discussion of Sharon observance and celebration of Juneteenth (Wednesday, June 19, 2024). People from the *The Broccoli Gallery* are interested in working with DEIC for Juneteenth. Shelley Keimach is the lead for Juneteenth.

8. 7:30 p.m. Sharon Day post-event discussion

Alison reported that people read the information at the table, printed on heavy cardboard and they took the bookmarks. People seemed to appreciate the definitions that were printed and the bookmarks. There were lovely responses from people on the leaves on the tree.

9. 7:35 p.m. Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day – Day of Dialogue 11/14/2023, update. Toben contacted some people about the Day to see about interest. No ground swell at the moment.

10. 7:38 p.m. Strategic Plan status update

In the past, we have discussed some scenario cards for use around microaggressions. Toben had discussion with the town communication director, Donna Whitehead. She suggested that we cannot list events on the town calendar that are not town sponsored. She is willing to list the anti-defamation calendar on our site. Toben will continue to make slides of events which will be “lifted” to our site. Toben would like to invite people to co-sponsor events with us.

11. 7:44 p.m. Announcements regarding upcoming events

Toben shared on-screen upcoming events the remainder of October and for November. Please see the DEIC website and the Sharon Cable TV recording.

Sharon Interfaith Thanksgiving service is Sunday, November 19, 2023 at 7 pm at the Unitarian Church.

12. 7:57 p.m. Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting

Toben mentioned that DEIC were called out on social media for not speaking out on the attack on Israel. DEIC is advisory to the Select Board and are unable to respond with statements outside public meetings. We do not have a presence on social media. Our comments would be in our monthly meetings. Alison stated that how Toben spoke at the beginning of this meeting is an example of how we can speak to people’s pain when tragic events happen. Hanna Switekowski was the emcee for the rally by the lake on October 11. Perhaps the Health Department could look into providing and advertising counseling for residents during times of extreme stress.

Bill mentioned that 12 families are staying in the Econo Lodge. There may be as many as 90 families at Econo Lodge and possibly Best Western in November or December. A group of town and state employees and Sharon citizens are meeting every Thursday from 11:00 Am to noon for updates and problem solving. Contact Meg Dusseault for more information about the weekly meetings. Monetary donations can be through the Fire Department (made out to Town of Sharon.) A spread sheet of needs by room number is being set up. The group will be looking for houses of worship and individuals to “adopt” residents by room number. Massachusetts has a “right to shelter” law. Bill suggested that we also have a spread sheet that list the talents, skills, and gifts that these new residents have. These people are not merely needy, but also people who can make contributions to the community. Laundry and transportation are on-going needs. People are asked to work with the National Guard who is on-site from noon to 6 PM to help with distribution of needed items.

13. 8:22 p.m. Appreciations, regrets, and learnings.

8:28 Next DEIC meeting is at 7:00 PM on November 9, 2023. Bill made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Lajos. All voted in favor.

Submitted by Bill Kondrath