

SHARON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 14, 2023 — 7:00 p.m.

(Times below are approximate.)

1. 7:05 p.m. Attendance

Present: Toben Asklar (chair); Alison Kellom; Bill Kondrath; Lajos Kamocsay; Marjorie Mitlin; Shelley Keimach; CP Pototsky; Chandu Krishnan; Kim Hokanson; Sgt. Chris Dumais (Sharon Police Department representative).

2. 7:07 p.m. Toben Asklar opened with a meditation on unity and peace within our community:

Since the terrorist acts on Israel and the resulting war in Gaza in October, our diverse Sharon community (like many communities) at times dwells on extremely complex and divisive world events. We try to make sense of war and suffering when there is little sense to be found.

Let us continue to work and talk together. Fight divisiveness, fight antisemitism and Islamophobia, fight fear and othering. Let us stand against hate and intolerance.

Our tools are communication, education, understanding, and open discussions.

I was recently reminded of poet Mary Oliver's question at the end of "Poem 133: The Summer Day": "Tell me, what is it you plan to do/with your one wild and precious life?"

In this season of light and miracles, may we use our "wild and precious life" in part to sow peace and belonging, to dwell in love.

3. 7:08 p.m. Toben introduced and welcomed the new police department liaison, Sgt. Chris Dumais, and thanked the outgoing representative, Lt. Leonard.

4. 7:09 p.m. Email Correspondence presented by Marjorie Mitlin, Correspondence Clerk:

11/9/23 Contacted by Don Williams, letting people know about the Sharon Historical Society's Open House on Saturday, Nov. 25th from 2-4:00. They will be having a speaker: Joe Blansfield who will talk about his year in Iraq working in a combat support hospital.

11/12/23 The Mass Housing Authority Educators contacted us about a program teaching about the ABC's of The Immigration Survey. This is a resource which will teach about the best practices of how to engage with Sharon's New Families.

11/13/23 Toben updated the calendar of event and observances. They also shared the slides from Thursday's meeting at the Historical Society's Veteran's event.

12/1/23 Tom Wu and Wilma Yuen contacted us. Informing us about a Cottage Street school child who was allegedly being neglected in the town. According to them, DCF was contacted.

12/1/23 Leandra McLean informed the DEIC about a presentation by Dr. Chris Lewis who would share the results of the survey done by 410 community members

looking into perceived and actual results of the use of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, and vaping. mental health results were also compiled. All of the results were compared to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey done previously.

12/6/23 Email from Gamal Abdelkader talking about the School Committee's meeting on Dec. 6th. He acknowledged Avi Shemtov's, \aplology, which he said was well received by the signatories. They felt heard and understood, but they were frustrated that the situation did not appear on the agenda, and a discussion would have to be put off until the next meeting. Although they appreciate Avi's apology, they still feel that more needs to be done in terms of tightening up the social media policy and future required DEI training.

12/12/23 Toben sent out the agenda for tonight's DEIC board meeting.

5. 7:12 p.m. Approval of minutes from three meetings:

April 11/9/2023. Margie motioned and Shelley Keimach seconded that the minutes of April 9, 2023 be approved. 7 in favor, 2 abstentions by persons who were not part of the committee in April 2023.

May 11, 2023. Lajos Kamocsay motioned and Margie seconded that the minutes of May 11, 2023 be approved. 8 in favor. 1 abstention (not yet a member).

November 9, 2023. Kim Hokanson motioned and Shelley seconded that the minutes of November 9, 2023 be approved. The minutes were unanimously approved.

6. 7: 17 p.m. Sharon Pluralism Network (SPN) is planning a very brief silent vigil to bring people together at the lake on January 7, 2024. No tee shirts, signs, posters. There was a lengthy discussion about insurance. The board of SPN is concerned about having an event without insurance. One quote for insurance was about \$500. A long discussion followed about sponsorship and about insurance, including prior events that might offer precedents. The question arose about what offering our sponsorship means in terms of liability. We did not have insurance when Darius Coombs spoke at the Unitarian Church. The discussion concluded without a vote.

5. 7:54 p.m. DEI Training for members of committees and boards.

Bill Kondrath stated that a first draft of a contract with SunShower Learning is in the works. The draft contract is for 125 people and 4 months offering one course on "Disarming Microaggressions" for boards and elected officials. The cost is \$2312.50 or \$18.50 per person. The committees named did not include the DEIC. Toben is in communication with Kiana Pierre-Louis and Fred Turkington. As a trainer and researcher, Kim asked about pre- and post- testing to measure the training effectiveness. There is none. Lajos asked if having a town DEI director would enable more follow-up, compliance, and support.

6. 8:07 Sharon's New Residents. Kim was at the meeting today and she reported the residents will be moving from the Econo Lodge to the Best Western with the help of the National Guard. Shelley has helped to set up classes in English at the Chinese Church. People seem to be feeling more stable. We will be getting more residents as well (from other sites in MA).

7: 8:12 Social Media Policy passed by Select Board for town appointed and elected officials. This policy is for town employees while they are working. It is not for town committees or for elected officials. The policy is for town employees. And it is about town websites for the most part. And guidance for them on their own personal websites.

When free speech harms someone on social media, we need to attend to it. The School Board chair has apologized numerous times and, I (Toben) think did the work to repair. He also went out into the community and met with the various stakeholders who signed the letter to the SB. He also met with the Imam of the mosque who felt harmed.

Appointed committee members come up for re-appointment and this is the occasion to bring up behaviors of members before they are reappointed.

There is not a statement on our webpage inviting people to reach out to us with concerns they have about harmful statements and actions. (Maybe there should be.) How we can better support our town members.

It would be appropriate for us to acknowledge correspondence sent to us directly with a formal response to the sender and that a summary will be made of the correspondence at the next meeting. Margie acknowledged that she would do that. When we are cc-ed on things, it may not be necessary.

8:26 Brief Summary: SSPARC (Sharon Substance Prevention and Resource Coalition) survey results. Dr. Chris Lewis (psychologist) has worked with SSPARC for 3-4 years. He received 110 surveys. This was more than previous years. What are youth patterns re drug and alcohol abuse and mental health. The largest problem seems to be alcohol. Not vaping. Depression and anxiety among young people seem to be high. The marijuana dispensary does not seem to have increased problems with marijuana. It seems that people are having trouble accessing resources for reasonable costs.

INTERFACE—mental health referral service—is available to people in Sharon. The program will help individuals find a referral. Leandra McLean, town nurse, is publicizing this. Every year a Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is done. This was compared to the survey that Chris Lewis did.

8:37 We are due to have a town report in January. The chair asked for topics that should be included and asked that committee members send them topics soon for inclusion. Some items to include: Indigenous People's Day, Sharon Day, Juneteenth, Social Media Policy draft, training module for committee and board members, strategic planning, Thanksgiving event sponsored by Sharon Interfaith Clergy, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, recommendation for full-time town DEI director, Foxboro Mascot discussion, co-sponsor Sharon Pride, number of letters/emails received (Allison and Margie to add number of correspondences),

8:47 Strategic plan update. We may discuss, at our next meeting, serving as liaisons other committees and boards. We might think more about orienting new members. Shelley is working on Juneteenth, looking for more traction.

8:52 Announcements and events.

A list of upcoming events (December, 2023 through February, 2024) can be found at:
[List of events dec_to_feb_events and observances](#)

8:57 Subjects not anticipated in 48 hours. None.

8:58 Appreciations, Regrets, and Learnings

9:07 Next meeting January 11, 2024 Kim moved that we adjourn and Margie and Shelley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Submitted by Bill Kondrath

See attached list of upcoming events December 2023 to February 2024:

Sharon Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Upcoming DEI Observances & Events

DECEMBER

December 8-15: HANUKKAH • Jewish

December 14: Sharon DEIC meeting, virtual, 7 p.m.

December 14: Sharon Middle School winter concert. SMS, Mountain Street, Sharon, 6 p.m.

December 15: BILL OF RIGHTS DAY

December 19: Sharon High School Large Ensembles winter concert. SHS, 7 p.m.

December 21: WINTER SOLSTICE

December 24: CHRISTMAS EVE • Christian

December 25: CHRISTMAS • Western Christian

December 26, 2023-January 1, 2024: KWANZAA

JANUARY

January 1: NEW YEAR'S DAY

January 5: GURU GOBIND SINGH JI'S BIRTHDAY • Sikh

January 6: CHRISTMAS • Armenian Orthodox Christian

January 6: EPIPHANY | THEOPHANY • Christian/Eastern Orthodox

January 7: CHRISTMAS • Eastern Christian

January 7: [Tentative] Silent Vigil. Sharon Pluralism Network. Details TBA

January 10: Heights Elementary Winter Concert. Sharon Middle School, 7 p.m.

January 11: Sharon DEIC meeting, virtual, 7 p.m.

January 11: SHS Small Ensembles Winter Concert. Sharon High School, 7 p.m.

January 11 & 13: Indigenous & African American History Tour.

Stoughton MLK event. Lucius Clapp Building, 6 Park St., Stoughton.

Jan. 11: 6-8 p.m.; Jan. 13: 2-4 p.m.

January 15: MAKAR SANKRANTI • Hindu

January 15: DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY

January 15: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Celebration.

Free, all-ages event. Stoughton Public Library, 84 Park St., Stoughton, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rev-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-annual-celebration-pursuing-your-purpose-tickets-750458320037>.

January 15-19: NO NAME-CALLING WEEK & LIBERATION WEEK

January 25: MAHAYANA NEW YEAR • Buddhist, date varies from region to region.

January 25: TU B'SHVAT • Jewish New Year's Day for Trees

January 27: INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

FEBRUARY

February 1: NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY

February 6-10: NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR WEEK

February 8: Sharon DEIC meeting, virtual, 7 p.m.

February 10: LUNAR NEW YEAR • Confucian, Daoist & Buddhist

February 10: The Great Sharon Bake Off. Registratio/information:

<https://www.uusharon.org/happenings/the-great-sharon-bake-off/> .

Unitarian Church of Sharon, 4 North Main St., Sharon. 3-6 p.m.

February 13: SHROVE TUESDAY • Western Christian

February 14: VALENTINE'S DAY

February 14: ASH WEDNESDAY • Western Christian

February 15: NIRVANA DAY • Buddhist

February 15: SUSAN B. ANTHONY DAY

February 19: PRESIDENTS' DAY

February 19-25: AROMANTIC AWARENESS WEEK

February 20: U.N. WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

February 22: CHOSEN FAMILY DAY

February 24: MAGHA PUJA • Buddhist

February 26-29: AYYÁM-I-HA or INTERCALARY DAYS • Bahá'í

February is BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Sources of Observances & Events

Individual community submissions, Sharon DEIC member announcements, and Sharon

Public School's Dispatch

Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Calendar of Observances 2023 and 2024:

<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-04/calendar-of-observances-2023.pdf>

<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/calendar-of-observances-2024.pdf>

GLSEN's School Year Calendar: https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/GLSEN_School_Calendar_2023_24.pdf

Sharon Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Upcoming DEI Observances & Events

December

It's Winter Concert Season!



Celebrate our talented student musicians and their dedicated teachers at SPS' free community-wide winter concerts.

East: Monday, December 11, 7pm at SMS
Cottage St: Wednesday, December 13, 7pm at SHS
SMS: Thursday, December 14, 6pm at SMS
SHS Large Ensembles: Tuesday, December 19, 7pm at SHS
Heights: Wednesday, January 10, 7pm at SMS
SHS Small Ensembles: Thursday, January 11, 7pm at SHS

December 8-15: HANUKKAH • Jewish

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December (cont.)

December ACTIVITIES *For 11th-12th Grade!*

THINK TANK: STUDY SESSION Monday, Dec. 6 at 5:30 pm Need a place to study? Join us for quiet study, creative breaks, healthy snacks and more.	NEW! ANIME CLUB Tuesday at 5:30 pm Love anime? Each week we will celebrate our favorite shows with snacks, crafts, activities and discussions.	TWEEN/TEEN ADVISORY BOARD Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 4 pm If you're a member, sign up! If you're not, apply online to become our help-plan new library staff!	HOLIDAY CARING CARDS Wednesday, Dec. 6 at 4 pm All ages can get together to make cards for our senior neighbors.
CRAFTIVITY: BEADED JEWELRY Saturday, Dec. 8 at 9 pm Let's make beaded jewelry with TAB member Sabra!	WINTER CRAFTERNOON Monday, Dec. 9 at 1 pm Make glittery trees and snow ornaments!	TWEEN/TEEN TUESDAYS: JEOPARDY Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 4 pm We'll compete in teams on topics from history to pop culture.	VISION BOARD WORKSHOP Mon, Dec. 12 at 5 pm Kickstart the year to come at this crafty, creative program.

Questions? Contact Amy Greil, Tween/Teen Librarian at agreil@sharon.ocl.org

Register here!

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS @ THE LIBRARY AGES 0-10 DECEMBER 2023

Sharon Public Library
 781-784-1578
 Follow us on social media: @sharonpubliclibraryMA

Special Events

Ms Marcia Exploration Station Monday 12/4, 1:30 PM Ages 3-5	Seasonal Sensory Stations Tuesday 12/26, 11:00 AM All Ages
Cozy Critter Story Time at Patriot Place Tuesday, 12/5, 11:00 AM All Ages	Crafternoon: Snowflakes Tuesday 12/26, 2:00 PM Grades K-2
Caring Cards Wednesday, 12/6, 4:00 PM All Ages	Pom-pom Pals: Penguins Thursday, 12/28, 2:00 PM Grades 3-5
Marvelous Math Wednesday, 12/13, 4:30 PM All Ages	LEGO PALOZA Join our lego club! Complete challenges or free build Thursdays at 4:30 PM 12/14, 12/21, 12/18
Crazy Coloring Drop-In Thursday, 12/14, 1:00 PM All Ages	
Silly Snowman Science Wednesday, 12/20 at 4:30 PM Grades K-5	

Weekly Story Times

Strollers & Stories Ages 0-2 Mondays at 10:30 AM 12/4, 12/11, 12/18	Whimsical Winter Ages 2-6 Thursdays at 11:00 AM 12/7, 12/14, 12/21, 12/28
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Register for all programs on the library website! Scan or visit tinyurl.com/spl-cal

Questions? Email Rachael at rsavage@sharon.ocl.org

Know Your Town Government

Discussion with
 Fred Turkington, Town Administrator
 Lauren Barnes, Assistant Town Administrator

Watch on lwss.org, Sharon TV, and sharontv.com

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF SHARON-STOUGHTON
lwss.org

Winterlist!

- Make winter playlist
- Drink homemade hot chocolate
- Set alarm to register for Winter/Spring Adult Education!

Registration opens
Monday, December 11th
 at 9:00 am!

sharon.annualtyeducation.com

January

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WWW.STOUGHTONHISTORY.COM

THE TOWN OF STOUGHTON & COMMUNITY PARTNERS PRESENTS:

INDIGENOUS & AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY TOUR

JOIN US FOR THIS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN STOUGHTON

TOUR IN COLLABORATION WITH MLK JR DAY JANUARY 15TH!

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED DURING TOUR!

LUCIUS CLAPP BUILDING
6 PARK ST, STOUGHTON, MA 02072

JANUARY 11TH 6-8PM
13TH 2-4PM



THE TOWN OF STOUGHTON PRESENTS

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION

PURSUING YOUR PURPOSE

MONDAY, JANUARY 15 | 10AM-4PM
STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
84 Park St. Stoughton, MA

FREE & OPEN TO PUBLIC

SPEAKERS - SMALL BUSINESS VENDORS - PERFORMANCE - FOOD TRUCK



January (cont.)

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February (cont.)

Save the Date

Calling All Bakers

to the
Great Sharon Bake Off

A fundraiser for

The Unitarian Church of Sharon
4 North Main Street Sharon MA 02067

Saturday
February 10th, 2024
3:00 - 6:00 PM
(Snow date Feb 11)

For information
and registration
visit [uusharon.org/happenings](https://www.uusharon.org/happenings)

SHARON
BAKE OFF

Sources of Observances & Events

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