

Town of Sharon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC)

November 11th, 2022 Meeting Minutes

This open meeting of the Town Sharon Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee is being conducted remotely consistent with Mass General Law due to the outbreak of the Covid19 Virus. Public access of this meeting does not ensure public participation. This meeting does include public comment. The committee chair Mrs. Wendy Alexis-Janvier started by welcoming everyone and calling all committee members, liaisons and speakers to confirm their attendance.

Attendance:

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Wendy Alexis-Janvier - chair, present
Marjorie Mitlin - present
Bill Kondrath - present
Alison Kellom – clerk, present
Julie Rowe - School Committee Liaison, present
Lajos Kamocsay - present
Toben Asklar- vice chair, present
Shelley Keimach – present
Kiana Pierre-Louis – Select Board Liaison, present
CP – School GSA liaison

Stuart Jacoby, events co-chair, Moms Demand Action - present
Charlotte Hogan – membership co-chair, Moms Demand Action – present

Email Correspondence:

Community member emailed about speaking with DEIC members at the Sharon Day event. Requested an opportunity to speak to the group about their current project.

Moms Demand Action Presentation

Stuart Jacoby talked about starting the Moms Demand Action group in the Town of Sharon, in the summer of 2022, with a focus on the issue of Gun Violence. National organization. Advocates for public safety measures and common-sense solutions to prevent gun violence and save lives. Not anti-gun, they are anti-gun violence. Supports the Second Amendment, but wants to take a stand against ghost guns, large capacity magazines, illegal firearms entering urban areas.

Hoping to have a Safe Gun Storage program in Sharon and the SPD. Hope to reach out to survivors of gun violence. Stuart shares his personal story of gun violence. Stuart shares another personal story of gun violence while teaching at a school. Shares statistics on gun violence deaths, 60% suicides, 40% homicides.

Charlotte speaks about Uvalde school shooting, decided to reach out to Moms Demand Action and set up a Sharon chapter. School shootings are rare, gun violence more prevalent in urban areas. Working on voting, sent out 500 post cards to areas to support common-sense gun laws. Not about taking guns away, changing infrastructure around guns and their storage. Talks about false gun threat at Sharon High School that recently happened. Working with SPD Chief Coffey to create a program called "Be Smart", teach community about safe gun storage in the home. Work with local government, PTOs and school administration.

Sandy Hook Vigil held on December 14th, 10 year of Sand Hook school shooting. Inviting SPD and SFD, PTOs, Select Board, State Representatives and State Senators to event. Stuart adds that town clergy are also invited.

Stuart talks about guns in suburbs making their way into urban areas. Youth on youth gun violence is a big issue. Talks of a survivor of gun violence, and how it impacts people on many levels.

Charlotte talks about National Mom's Demand Action is bi-partisan, emphasis on gun safety. Moms Demand Action is part of Every Town for Gun Safety Network. Endorses gun-sense candidates, must answer questions.

Shelley has a question about any Legislation in Massachusetts or Nationally, are there laws that hold parents accountable for NOT storing their guns safely. Stuart did not have an answer, possibly part of the ghost gun legislation. Shelley asks Stuart to explain ghost guns, which are self-assembled with no serial number. Circumvents the legal sale of guns. Can also be 3d printed and assembled.

Shelly asks what their plans are with working with the schools in general and specifically in Sharon. Charlotte answers with speaking to Chief Coffey and get his input on what he wants to focus on. Inviting parents through the PTO to meet and discuss concerns. Find ways to connect with the community. Working with the Mass Coalition of Gun Violence.

Stuart talks about the warning signs of suicide or other forms of gun violence. See something, say something. Hopes to build community support. Charlotte mentions that Moms Demand Action encompasses everyone, not just moms.

Julie Rowe, School Committee Liaison, asks a question about partnering with groups against suicide, but also working with groups working against gang violence. Wanted to mention that the new High School was built to be very secure, double automatic locks, reinforced walls and glass.

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Lajos mentions that he is taking the ALICE training, which focuses on active shooter situations. Talks about the acronym, with the letter C meaning counter, creating diversions to draw the shooter away from others. He is concerned with that being taught to children. Thinks students should be able to use their cellphones in the building, work with cell providers so that there is coverage in that area. Appreciates the advocacy for safe gun storage.

Margie wanted to say thank you for bringing it to everyone's attention. In Sharon High School in 9th grade, they teach suicide prevention, warning signs of depression, and learning warning signs etc. Sharon Substance Prevention and Resource Coalition funded the Youth Risk Behavior survey found that there was a large amount of suicide ideation that was more than substance abuse percentages. One of their initiatives is to support the same issues that the Moms Demand Action supports.

Kiana wanted to thank them for bringing attention to the amount of suicide by guns. Answering Shelley's question that yes, there is a law that you must store your gun in a tamper resistant locked storage container.

Dr. Sejal Prajapati Presentation

Dr. Sejal Prajapati a clinical Psychologist. Talks about her "Commit to You" program. Sejal talks about her work in Self Compassion and how we relate to ourselves and humanity. There were technical difficulties sharing the slideshow presentation, which she used as an example of how she was able to show how she uses her work to be self-compassionate in times of difficulty. Developed program while a fulltime caregiver to her young children. Fellowship at William James College is focused on DEI. She grew up in diverse areas, which shielded her from other people's experiences.

Currently lives in Sharon, moved recently because it was a more diverse town. Wants to help her students to see their mindsets and why it is important to recognize diversity. Asking how do I want to show up in the world. Facing challenges, that that is normal. We can be hard on ourselves as well as the external pressures. Teaches people to regulate their emotions to show up for challenging experiences. Learning to change the negative internal voice to be supportive instead of negative.

Kiana loves the concepts of self-compassion and self-empathy and how Dr. Prajapati responded to the technical difficulties. Kiana asks what demographic they are focused on. Dr. Prajapati initially worked with college students, but also with high school students, moms, a diverse group of individuals.

Margie asks for clarification on how the DEIC can help Dr. Prajapati. She responded with hopes to collaborate with the DEIC in ways to help the community.

Dr. Prajapati talks about the three main components of her program,

- Showing up in our lives and engaging in what really matters to you.
- Becoming your own support system
- Utilizing skills to help you cope and staying on track to your values.

Kiana speaks about the different groups in the town that could use her help to cope with their trauma.

Wendy speaks about the black community less likely to seek help with their trauma, and how important this program is for those that need that extra help.

Shelley thanks Dr. Prajapati presenting to the DEIC, appreciates the work that they do.

Announcements Community upcoming events:

- Sandy Hook Vigil at the center of Town of Sharon, December 14th, sponsored by Moms Demand Action.
- Toben mentions Trans Day of Remembrance will be November 20th. Candlelight vigil at First Parish at Arlington Center.
- Toben talks about Trans and Non Binary youth and their real, lived experience, hybrid event, November 16th at 6pm. Cambridge Heathy Children's Task Force, Cambridge Public Library, Project 10 East
- Town of Sharon Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, Sunday November 20th, 7^{pm} First Congregational Church in Sharon. Not focus on the history but allowing the people in Sharon to give thanks. Collection for the church food pantry.

DEIC Updates:

- DEIC Logo
 - Kiana said that she's not sure about the logo, might not be possible if it is a town committee. Town Logo might need to be included, or not at all. Will check to see if it is possible.
- DEIC 2022-2023 Statigic Plan
 - Toben shares updates on the Strategic Plan Subcommittee, they will be meeting November 15th, 7-8pm. Has a list of priorities. Did some research on other DEIC plans for ideas on models for Town of Sharon DEIC.
 - Kiana mentions that Select Board has a goal for a DEIC strategic plan as well, mentions there might be a partnership with the DEIC Strategic Plan Subcommittee.
- Transcribing Meeting minutes
 - Alison mentions that if we set up the zoom recording settings, it can record to the cloud and add the closed caption transcribing.
 - Amy at Sharon TV mentions that there is a setting to record closed caption, just need to remind the person running the zoom call.
- Social Media Policy
 - Working with Margie, need to meet with the Select Board to go over the Social Medial Policy.

Topic Not Anticipated within 48 hours:

None

Motion to adjourn the meeting was seconded and approved by all members attending, at 8:45 pm the meeting was adjourned.

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