

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Selectman Tim Kaelin
Asst Town Administrator Becca Meekins
Mary Leach
Lauren Bailey-Jones
Mariam Ibrahim
Shika Holland
Diedra Wrighting



MEMBERS ABSENT:

Hamilton Soriano
Virginia Simms George

OPEN AND WELCOME FROM CHAIRMAN, Tim Kaelin:

Selectman Kaelin welcomed the committee for a meeting of the Northborough Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting on April 15th just past 7 PM.

Ms. Meekins: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, orders suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law General Laws Chapter 38 Section 18 in the Governor's March 15, 2020 order, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in person attendance by members of the public will be permitted. This meeting will be streamed live but will not have an option for public participation. To view or listen only, please visit the Town of Northborough's web page which will bring you to the Town of Northborough's You Tube link.

Tim Kaelin conducted a verbal roll call of all present members. Becca Meekins followed with provisions of the open meeting law.

Approval of March 18, 2021 Minutes:

Motion to approve: Diedra Wrighting
Seconded: Mariam Ibrahim

Roll call vote: Marcy Leach: aye; Diedra Wrighting: aye; Lauren Bailey-Jones: aye; Shika Holland: aye; Mariam Ibrahim: aye; Becca Meekins: aye; Tim Kaelin: aye; minutes are approved.

Survey and Results:

Tim notified the Committee that he has started to go through the survey results but has not finalized the analysis. Tim shared his screen with the Committee and walked through the results from the survey with the Committee. Received 773 total responses from the survey with an estimated completion rate of 81%. Of the 773 responses, 672 of them lived in Northborough and were able to complete the survey. Tim

mentioned that he removed responses that did not complete any of the questions which resulted in 554 usable responses. Tim explained that the number of responses dictates the margin of error. For our survey, the margin of error is about 4% based on the number of responses received. Tim explained that the most common answer was “neither agree nor disagree”.

Shika mentioned after reviewing the first few comments and results that she feels there is an educational opportunity for the Committee which could move some of the answers out of the “neither agree nor disagree” category. Tim Kaelin agreed and added that it would be helpful to provide more exposure to different cultures. Diedra Wrighting mentioned that she thought we would get even more insightful information when we compare results based on demographic information.

Diedra Wrighting expressed a nuance that she felt could not be captured in the survey related to not feeling included that is more difficult to express. Mariam Ibrahim agreed with Diedra’s sentiments. Tim mentioned that he recently read *Caste* by Isabelle Wilkerson. The theme of the book centers around the racial caste that exists in the United States and one of the topics that resonated with Tim is that people are often not exposed to people or cultures that are different from them and as a result, they do not know how to react when they do.

Lauren Bailey-Jones thanked Diedra for sharing her experiences. The experiences of the people who live in the Town of Northborough are going to shape our work, whether that be through focus groups, or listening sessions. The survey gives us a good overview, but the nuances Diedra speaks about cannot be collected through a survey.

Tim continued to go through the survey results.

Diedra asked about a grant that was recently awarded to the Town to assess sidewalks. She asked if that would maybe improve the current state of the existing sidewalks, make them more ADA accessible and perhaps add more sidewalks. Becca Meekins mentioned that the Town did receive a Shared Winter Streets grant to upgrade some crosswalks near parks, add pedestrian activated flashing beacons, and to install wheelchair accessible ramps at those crosswalks and sidewalks.

Committee discussed overview of the responses. Tim Kaelin will finalize the results of the survey to present at the May 20th meeting.

Upcoming Meeting with the School’s Coalition for Equity:

Lauren Bailey-Jones gave a quick summary of the work that the Coalition is currently working on. Diedra Wrighting mentioned that there is a Community Engagement Subcommittee as a part of the Coalition, and they are looking to make connections with other community groups and bring educational opportunities to the community together.

The Coalition for Equity will attend the next Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting on May 6, 2021.

Update on Medium and Long-Term Objectives:

Lauren Bailey-Jones planned to focus on Community Engagement and hopes that through the meeting with the Coalition for Equity, the relationship will become clearer and ideas will come from that discussion.

Shika Holland asked about deliverables and when she should plan for preparing that. Tim explained that by the second meeting in May, members should have some concrete ideas of what types of ideas and recommendations the Committee will put forth. Tim mentioned that he reached out to the Chair of the Board of Selectmen about giving an update in July to the Board of Selectmen. Shika asked if Tim could send the survey data that the Committee reviewed today for members to review. Tim said that he would send the PDF to the group to review.

The Committee discussed upcoming meetings and topics for upcoming meetings.

ADJOURNMENT:

Lauren Bailey-Jones moved the Committee vote to adjourn.

Becca Meekins seconded the motion.

Roll call taken as follows:

Ms. Meekins: Aye	Ms. Ibrahimi Aye
Ms. Bailey-Jones: Aye	Selectmen Kaelin: Aye
Ms. Leach: Aye	Ms. Holland: Aye
Ms. Wrighting: Aye	

Meeting is adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

by Becca Meekins

Northborough Diversity & Inclusion Committee