



CITY OF DOVER

AD-HOC COMMITTEE FOR RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION – APPROVED MINUTES

Meeting Type: **Regular Meeting**
Meeting Location: **City Hall, Council Conference Room**
Meeting Date: **Thursday, May 20, 2021**
Meeting Time: **5:30 PM**

Regular Members: 11

Luz Bay; Mark Brave; Lauren Conley; Maggie Fogarty; Timothy Mainella; Daniel Pontoh; Cora Quisumbing-King; Oscany Rodriguez DeJesus; Lina Shayo; Kathleen Blake; Councilor Dennis Shanahan, City Council Ex-officio; Jessica Rozzo, School Board
Ex-officio

Alternate Members: 2

Tess Beem; Jill Braceland

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM. Lina Shayo serves as chairperson.
Kathleen Blake read the Land Acknowledgement.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Lina Shayo, Luz Bay, Tim Mainella, Maggie Fogarty, City Councilor Dennis Shanahan. Present remotely: Kathleen Blake, Cora Quisumbing-King, Tess Beem, Lauren Conley, School Board member Jessica Rozzo.

Mike Joyal is also present.

Absent: Mark Brave, Oscany Rodriguez deJesus

3. DISCUSSION

This meeting has been called to review the proposed Land Acknowledgement in light of feedback from city councilors, and to discuss next steps.

Feedback included concerns that requiring the reading of the Land Acknowledgement prior to every City Council meeting risks that it become routine and less impactful. Additional concerns included one councilor's question that the use of the term "unceded" might expose the City to land claims. This councilor also questioned whether such a Land Acknowledgement is a worthwhile first act of Dover's Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee. He asks whether we can simply acknowledge that indigenous people were present when European settlers arrived.

Some Dover residents offered similar concerns to those expressed by councilors.

Dennis consulted with the City Attorney who finds no risk to the City of land claims based on the language in this Land Acknowledgement.

Cora and Kathleen shared their perspectives with regard to these questions which informed the committee discussion.



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Committee members addressed first the question of when the Land Acknowledgement should be read. Members agree that it should not be required for every meeting but rather, at the discretion of the Mayor, including at important events. And we agree that it should be posted prominently at City Hall, the public library and other public buildings as well as on the City website.

Members also agreed that the list of “whereas” will be revised to reflect these recommendations. The “be it resolved” segment will focus only on the adoption of the Land Acknowledgement itself.

With regard to the question about land claims, the committee believes that since the term ‘unceded’ is truthful, it must be included. It was noted that both the Dartmouth University and UNH Land Acknowledgements include the word ‘unceded.’

With regard to the reference to ‘the land, waterways and living beings,’ Kathleen explained that the ties to the land are foundational to indigenous culture and worldview. The inclusion of this language in the Land Acknowledgement is an important reminder of humans’ relationship to the ecosystem.

Committee members recognize and appreciate that this Land Acknowledgement was created with the guidance of the indigenous peoples of this land; the committee seeks to honor their wisdom and teachings.

Committee members affirmed the value of this resolution as its first official act, explaining that the work of racial equity must ‘begin at the beginning,’ and must begin by telling the truth.

The proposed resolution was approved according to the changes discussed (see attached). Dennis will forward to the City Council for consideration and approval at the May 26 meeting.

4. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 PM.