



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, July 28, 2022**
Meeting Time: **7:00 PM**

Regular Members: 11

Luz Bay; Lauren Conley; Timothy Mainella; Cora Quisumbing-King; Lina Shayo; Kathleen Blake; Jill Braceland; Tess Beem, Ariel Hayes; Councilor Linnea Nemeth, City Council Ex-officio; Maggie Fogarty, School Board Ex-Officio;

Alternate Members: 2

TBD

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Maggie Fogarty, Ariel Hayes, Luz Bay, Cora Quisumbing-King, Linnea Nemeth, Tim Mainella, Kathleen Blake

Also present: Mike Joyal

Regrets: Lina Shayo, Jill Braceland, Tess Beem, Lauren Conley

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Kathleen read the Land Acknowledgement.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

The June 23, 2022 minutes were read and unanimously approved.

5. CITIZENS FORUM

Whitney Carrier, resident of Toftree Lane in Dover, came to discuss issues of equity in the Dover school district. The full text of Whitney's discussion is below:

Hi my name is Whitney Carrier at xx Toftree Lane, I'm a teacher at the high school, I'm an adult ally for the Project Dream and I have two children in the district.

I am here today to discuss issues of equity in the district and urge you to help prevent instances like what I am about to tell you from happening to other families.

Our school district needs more training and resources in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. I am one of two people of color on the faculty at the high school but my children are part of an ever growing diverse population of students. I am speaking to you now as a parent in this district and I want to share the stories of my youngest child's experience this year. My nine year old is a student at Garrison Elementary School. Third grade is the year this district teaches them about heritage and where they come from as well as a look into Dover and Seacoast history. While I understand the value of these lessons, I have seen now with both of my children how it can impact the BIPOC community. A lot of curriculum surrounding these lessons in third grade focus on the white European immigration story. Being of indigenous descent, this focus leaves out a whole side of my child's family. When she came home with the papers to start thinking about how her family immigrated to this country, she was confused. She had heard the



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stories of her culture and knew that we did not immigrate, we were here already. Her teachers were accommodating and allowed her to tell her stories of our indigenous culture. I was still alarmed. How might other BIPOC students and their families answer questions like when did they come to America? Do you know where they entered America? Do you know why they decided to come to America? With questions like this you can hopefully see how this might be problematic for some in our community and even traumatic to have to answer these questions.

Another experience and probably the most difficult for me and her to discuss, was her field trip to the Woodman Museum. As I was putting her to bed the night after her field trip, I asked her how it went. She told me what many of us with young children have probably heard about the museum. They got to go inside this really old house and she was excited to tell me about all the old things inside and how they hid things in the floorboards, why the windows were so small and how they had holes in the walls to put their weapons through. Then my 9 year old got very quiet and buried her face in her pillow. I asked her what was wrong, I could see she was upset and didn't want to look at me. Into her pillow, after some prodding, she said, Mom, I don't understand why when they talk about Native Americans in school or on trips they always talk about us doing something bad, and I don't know what to say to my instructors. She went on to express how she feels uncomfortable every time Native Americans come up in class because then her classmates talk about them being bad. She is 9 and is already starting to understand the impacts of negative stereotyping and racism in our history. I am sure that because she found the words to express this to her mom that night, a teacher, that this was not the first time she has felt this way.

This broke my heart and I could tell it broke hers too. I tried to explain to her that she did not have to teach the adults about Native history or about the rich indigenous cultures that were living here on the Seacoast during colonial times. I reassured her that in our home we would continue to celebrate those communities and if she experienced anything like this again to let me know so we could talk about it. I let her know I understood how she was feeling because I had similar experiences growing up.

But this is unacceptable. No child should come home feeling this way. No parent should have to let their child know that their ancestors were not inherently bad in the hopes that the child does not think they are inherently bad too. We should be enriching their education from multiple perspectives and not just the dominant one. I believe it is the district and the city's responsibility to take a look at the curriculum and where we are sending our students on field trips to see how we can be more inclusive across all schools. My children should not have to wait to learn about diverse cultures in high school and even those classes are only electives. Because I teach in the district I know how we are lacking the diversity, equity and inclusion work that is necessary to prepare teachers for these issues. Our community is already becoming more diverse and I can tell you from our family's experiences that we are not ready to educate them. We are not preparing our educators properly across all schools to recognize these situations and



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make them better experiences for all minorities in our district. Without proper training and initiatives children like mine will continue to feel isolated and like they are outsiders in this community and that should be unacceptable for you. It is only a matter of time before Dover makes the national news again for a horrific incident. We desperately need the city and the school district to come together on this issue. My family is only one family. This is only one child's experience. Believe me when I say that we are not the only ones. Equity must be a priority.

6. CURRENT EVENTS

Whitney's comments sparked a discussion about equity and diversity in the Dover Public Schools. Kathleen, after hearing Whitney speak at a recent school board meeting, met with the district superintendent, who had expressed his desire to work with CREI and the Vision Keepers to work towards common DEI goals.

Denise and Paul Pouliot had recently met with the Woodman Museum's new director, who Kathleen says seems to be open to "decolonizing" the museum.

Kathleen suggested meeting with the cemetery committee to discuss the tabled DAR marker, which would have inaccurately called a Dover cemetery the "first settlers" burial ground. Kathleen moved to ask to meet with the cemetery committee to discuss. Ariel seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dover 400 and its narratives were also discussed. We hope to further establish relationships with the Dover 400 committee with the aim of helping them incorporate more Native American history and awareness in their communications. "The 400th was not the beginning". Kathleen noted examples of communication and "history" that is harmful to minorities. Linnea suggested putting together a toolkit or finding a way to help the 400 committee rather than just by giving input.

Kathleen moved that we disavow any stories or created material that are not historically accurate. Luz seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

The goal of Kathleen Blake's motion is to make sure that Dover's history is told in a way that is accurate. False history continues to do harm today. Discussion ensued on how best to ensure that these goals are reached, and what sort of work this would entail. This will be a living process.

Next, Ariel asked that we discuss the neo-nazi recruitment flyers distributed in Dover and the white supremacist gathering in nearby Kittery, Maine. Maggie had sent a photo of the flyers to Sean Locke, who heads the New Hampshire Attorney General's Civil Rights Unit.

The New Hampshire Indigenous Collaborative Collective, has secured grant money for a highway marker which will tell the accurate story of Major Waldron. This marker will likely be placed on Central Avenue between First and Second Streets.



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7. REVIEW, DISCUSS & VOTE

Co-chair discussion. Multiple members suggested nominating Tess to be the co-chair. Cora nominated Tess. Tim seconded. Luz and Cora have already approached Tess about being the co-chair, and Tess indicated her willingness. Tess's nomination was unanimously approved. We hope she will accept.

Calendar of events. Tess will forward the cleaned-up calendar of events to the group.

Work plan. Discussion ensued on the best way to keep and maintain the work plan. Cora suggested that we have a second "keeper" of the plan in addition to Lauren. The goal here is for all members to be able to see the most current version of the work plan. City Manager Joyal noted that the document can be sent to the group as "view only", but any feedback would have to be given at meetings on-record. We will discuss again next meeting.

Work plan items.

- Partnering with the Equity Vision Keepers to explore how we might be able to work in harmony
- Work with Cemetery Committee
- Work with 400 Committee (likely already in the plan)
- Work with Library and Woodman Institute (likely already in the plan). Make appointments to meet with new Woodman Institute director.

Indigenous People's Project - Humanities Project Grant. City Manager Joyal shared that the Pouliots have agreed to serve as subject matter experts for the purpose of applying for the NH Humanities Grant. The proposal has expanded to include working with the Pouliots and with library staff to put together some programming which will work in concert with the Land Acknowledgement plaques. The plaques will also be displayed with a link to a library website which will be constantly updated with resources to better tell the story of indigenous history in New Hampshire. The library is also working on putting together a collection to highlight indigenous history in New Hampshire.

Massachusetts DEI report. Linnea has found resources on the role of municipalities in fostering DEI in communities. Discussion ensued on the role and tenure of CREI. Long- and short-term goals were discussed. City Manager Joyal said that it would be helpful for him if we could answer some of the questions in the report around determining a common definition of DEI and refining some goals. City Manager Joyal can then use our input to approach city departments. The committee discussed the ways in which this report can be used as a guide to frame our work, goals, and implementation.



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8. NEW BUSINESS

Tim announced with great regret that he will be moving elsewhere in New Hampshire and that next month's meeting will be his last on this committee.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 PM.