



CITY OF DOVER

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

Meeting Type: **Regular Meeting**
Meeting Location: **Room 305, McConnell Center**
Meeting Date: **Thursday, August 25, 2022**
Meeting Time: **7:00 PM**

Regular Members: 9

Luz Bay; Tess Beem; Kathleen Blake; Jill Braceland; Lauren Conley; Emma Gelinas; Ariel Hayes; Cora Quisumbing-King; Lina Shayo; 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 7:05 PM by Tess Beem, the new co-chairperson of the committee.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Lina Shayo, Maggie Fogarty, Linnea Nemeth, Cora Quisumbing-King, Ariel Hayes, Jill Braceland, Kathleen Blake, Tess Beem, Lauren Conley. Luz Bay arrived at 7:30 PM. Tim Mainella arrived at 8:28 PM.

Also present: Colleen Bessette, Mike Joyal

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Cora Quisumbing-King read the Land Acknowledgement.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

Two corrections were made to the July minutes:

In Current Events – 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.

Regarding the grant for the highway marker – It was written by the NH Indigenous Collaborative Collective.

With these corrections, the July minutes were approved as amended.

5. CITIZENS FORUM

No one requested to speak during Citizens Forum.

6. AGENDA CHANGE

Committee members agreed to change the agenda to address the cemetery issue after Citizens Forum. Flag policy and the Massachusetts DEI guide for municipalities will be added to additional business.

7. Dover Cemetery Board inquiry by Susan Kelsch, Naming of 'First Settlers Burying Ground' and signage offered by Daughters of the Revolution

The committee welcomed Susan Kelsch, a member of the Cemetery Board. She is not speaking on behalf of the board, as they have not voted yet on the matter she is here to discuss. The signage offered by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for the 'First Settlers Burying Ground' remains tabled by the City Council. Susan proposes that the name of the cemetery be changed to better reflect the truth of who is buried there



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and the fact that the European settlers were not the first settlers in this area. Susan has brought the idea to the City Attorney, Josh Wyatt. A title search may be needed to confirm ownership of the land. The cost of this is likely \$2,000 or \$3,000. City officials also suggest a public forum, possibly a City Council workshop, so that the idea can be presented, and benefits and costs can be discussed. This would be a public discussion; any formal action by the City Council would be at a subsequent session.

Kathleen reminded the committee of our commitment to actively disavow false narratives pertaining to Dover's history. The first settlers to this land arrived more than 12,800 years ago. A truthful history must be told. The name of the cemetery needs to be changed. Adding the word 'European' would be sufficient to make the cemetery name accurate.

More information may be needed about who is actually buried there.

With regard to signage for the cemetery, Susan proposed that there be a QR code linked to library resources.

Concern was expressed about whether renaming the cemetery would make it difficult for historians to locate it when doing research. It is possible to address this by mentioning the former name in the signage.

With regard to the title search, we can request that the Cemetery Board move forward with this step, to request the title search and to consider renaming the cemetery. Lauren made a Motion to inform the Cemetery Board that we would like them to proceed with the title search and to consider renaming the cemetery to be historically accurate. The Motion was seconded by Ariel and unanimously approved. Tess will notify the board of our request via email, and she will attend their September 13 meeting.

8. CURRENT EVENTS

Committee Vacancy Inquiry by Katie Goodshal - Lina has responded to Katie Goodshal. New Member Emma Gelinis - Emma Gelinis has been sworn in and will join us next month.

New members should receive a binder as well as everyone's application. Lina will work with Colleen to gather this information. Our current contact list is on the website.

Updates on Indigenous Peoples Project – Kathleen reported on recent meetings with the Dover School District superintendent and curriculum coordinators. She is hopeful in response to the commitment expressed by these administrators to ensure that historically accurate material is taught. Kathleen and Whitney Carrier will read the Land Acknowledgement at the opening day for teachers on August 29.



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Kathleen also reported on a good meeting at the Woodman Institute with the new director, Jon Nichols. Denise and Paul Pouliot participated as well.

Linnea reported on her recent conversation with the Dover 400th Committee regarding inaccurate Facebook posts and incorporating more indigenous focus into the celebration program. She shared samples of how other communities have acknowledged indigenous history and presence during their celebrations. The Dover 400th Committee is responsive and eager to hear more from us; they are happy to promote programs organized by other groups, so as to extend the programs beyond their own capacity and bandwidth. The Land Acknowledgement is on the 400th website.

Kathleen will reach out to them to express concern about the possibility of an event that would recreate the 'Cocheco massacre.' Apparently, someone from the 400th committee had approached the NH Commission for Native American Affairs about this idea.

Mike Joyal reported that the NH Humanities Council has approved our grant proposal for \$10,000 for the Land Acknowledgement plaques with an expanded scope for community education. The funds will be used to purchase the plaques. The plaques will have a QR code linking to a page on the City website with more information. The City will organize two or three presentations in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples Day in October and Native American Heritage Month in November. These workshops will be created in partnership with the Pouliots.

9. REVIEW & DISCUSS

Define Ad-hoc term of the committee and proposed transition to standing committee – The ad-hoc period is specifically tied to the production of a final report. Committee members support transitioning to a standing committee, as the work for racial equity and inclusion is ongoing. The term of service for this committee is a 2-year renewable term. We wish to complete our written recommendations/final report for the City by the end of this calendar year. We will ask for an opportunity to present to the City Council at a workshop in January 2023. Linnea will bring a resolution to the City Council at a subsequent meeting of the City Council, requesting that this committee become a standing committee.

Several members expressed support for the creation of a staff position to support racial equity and inclusion in municipal operations. An additional approach is to ask each City department to incorporate DEI goals in their strategic planning.

At the September meeting, we will consider the possibility of recommending a name change for this committee.



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Appointments Committee – Jill met with City Councilor Lindsey Williams who provided an overview of how the Appointments Committee operates. Jill shared this information with this committee. Jill's presentation is attached to these minutes.

Committee members discussed how to get an accurate understanding of whether diverse demographics are represented on City boards and commissions. Can we collect volunteer data on a voluntary basis, such as through a survey? It is important that the information be voluntary and self-reported, not simply observed. We can include in our final report a recommendation to gather demographic data of board and committee members, using best practices.

Can we invite committees to express their diversity goals?

For further discussion on these matters, Linnea will invite Councilor Williams to a future meeting.

Business with immigrant workers, Chamber of Commerce – Cora shared reports that some immigrant workers are experiencing discrimination in the workplace. What is our role with regard to racial equity and inclusion issues involving private companies in Dover? We will take up this question at a future meeting.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Lina received an email from Erin Bassegio, Assistant City Planner with regard to the process of updating the Vision chapter of the City's Master Plan. The process will run from September to May, with four meetings planned. We are invited to name a representative from this committee. Tess volunteered. Lina will share the 'what is the vision' chapter for committee review and discussion at our September meeting.

Cora urged committee members to read the Massachusetts DEI plan for municipalities which was discussed at our July meeting. It is an excellent resource for our own recommendations and for City operations.

Flag policy – Linnea will follow up with the City Council about getting this on the agenda. Our committee still needs to finalize our recommended calendar; we will work on this at the September meeting.

September 15 to October 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month. We would like to request a proclamation from the City. Linnea will make the request.

Maggie mentioned that the Dover school district is interested in working with this committee as the school develops an equity plan. Ariel volunteered to join Maggie as a representative of this committee to continue the conversation with the school district.

We will add Old Business as a regular agenda item for future meetings.



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Farewell and many thanks to Tim Mainella. This is his last meeting as he is moving to Concord, NH.

11. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 PM.