



CITY OF DOVER

COMMITTEE FOR RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION – DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting Type: **Regular Meeting**
Meeting Location: **Council Conference Room, City Hall**
Meeting Date: **Thursday, November 14, 2024**
Meeting Time: **7:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

José called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Jennifer Ceide, Cora Quisumbing-King, José Feliciano, Maggie Fogarty, Sara Santiago, Alice Wade

Also present: Heather Worrell, Director of Human Services; Chris Parker, Deputy City Manager

Regrets: Ebenezer Yeboah

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Cora read the Land Acknowledgement.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

Jennifer Ceide noted that the presentation she is giving us with Ebenezer is postponed to a December meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously without changes.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(what is not completed will carry over to next meeting)

a. Meeting with Chris Parker (30 minutes) –

We introduced ourselves to Chris, sharing our length of membership and current roles.

Chris gave an overview of his role and responsibilities, including to provide guidance and leadership for the implementation of the strategic plan. He previously served in the Community Services Department and the Planning Department, including serving as Director. He transitioned to his current role in January 2022.

1. From the context of your role and responsibilities, how would you define the responsibility and mission of the CREI? – The committee's role is to identify elements of systemic racism and discrimination that have occurred within municipal operations. The hope is that we would also identify opportunities for resolution. The committee is a resource; it is not our responsibility to solve problems, but to identify concerns, provide a



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report summarizing these concerns, and suggest high level solutions to the City Manager and City Council, leaving it to them for implementation while offering support. Alice shared that for many of us, the scope is broader to include community partnerships such as with the Woodman Institute and the Chamber of Commerce.

Chris: We want to be welcoming to all, so if bringing people together to build community contributes to that, it is a good thing. This work and broader conversations can strengthen the community.

2. In your opinion, what format should the results/outcome from the Committee's work be presented in?

Present observations in report form to the City Manager and Council, as well as boards, commissions and committees. And offer support to address these issues. It is important for this committee to not expect people to come to us, but to reach out to them. We are a resource.

José: How do we get time with the officials, boards, etc.? Chris: Heather will assist us.

1st and 3rd Wednesdays are reserved for City Council workshops. Chris offered to share the meeting schedule for all boards, committees and commissions. We can speak at their public forum, introduce the committee and offer to explore opportunities for connection and collaboration. Our work with the waterfront commission was named as an example, during which we shared resources – and an introduction of the Pouliots – to advise the naming process.

We discussed how to gather data/information about current practices within municipal departments, utilizing our staff liaison to bring back information about key areas of interest/curiosity which we can then review and reflect back additional questions/concerns.

3. How advanced is the DEI journey of Dover government and how would you characterize this: as beginners, mature or subject matter expert level?

Chris: It is "maturing." We are beyond the awareness and compliance stage. We're integrating our knowledge, analyzing data, and building a workplace culture of learning and inclusion, looking beyond labels. We continue to self-reflect and evolve, aware that we will always need to self-correct.

José: Is this maturity due to people being educated or systems carrying it forward?

Chris: It's a mix. Senior management is proactive, and younger staff bring strong awareness of and commitment to DEI.

4. To what extent does the City make decisions with a lens of DEI? When using a DEI lens to make decisions for the City, what are the most common aspects DEI used or referenced?

Chris offered that DEI decisions are "unconsciously intentional." "Everyone should get the same opportunity, and should have a level playing field."



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We discussed that this was more of an ‘equality’ approach than an equity lens. An equity lens might take into account who is underrepresented in the applicant pool and in decision-making, as well as whose eligibility could be enhanced with mentorship of new hires, as well as cultural competence preparation for staff to promote retention.

Chris expressed support for individualized supports to promote success.

Cora mentioned that this committee had previously reviewed staff and hiring data. Representation is important, while acknowledging the context of a majority White community and state. What can Dover do to achieve representation where it can be done? How can we make sure that our outreach addresses our equity goals?

Chris mentioned the pressure on wages due to the direct relationship with taxpayer funding.

Returning to the question about whether the City intentionally uses DEI tools, Chris shared that “we don’t use those words. We want to be inclusive. We don’t have a rubric.”

5. What role do you play in advancing DEI?

Chris: I ask “why.” We require training to reflect on unconscious bias. Maggie asked if the executive department has specific DEI goals. Chris: Not really. Maggie: Maybe this committee could offer some as recommendations.

6. Given your knowledge of our vision/goals for equity and inclusion, how could collaborate better? What can we do differently from what we do today?

Chris: If I were you, I would be worried about continuously chasing the next thing, growing the plan. Keep it focused and be clear about accomplishing goals. Identify a cutoff point. Otherwise, it’s always in flux. Know when you’re done and can step back to move onto other goals. Finish what you start.

Alice referenced the implementation plan in support of this idea.

We discussed the opportunity for a committee member to join Chris for one of his podcast episodes. We will coordinate this with the presentation of our implementation plan report to the City Council.

7. Which boards and commissions would have the greatest impact on DEI initiatives? How would you suggest we extend our influence with boards and commissions? How can we influence them to have a DEI lens on their decisions?

Chris suggests that we speak at public forum at the meetings of these bodies: City Council, School Board, Recreation Advisory Board, Planning and Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Board of Health. This will provide an opening of communication to explore collaborations and opportunities for consultation.

We expressed appreciation for the time and insights that Chris shared with the committee.



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b. Discussion of plan for Implementation Plan Goal 2.2 - “Create two-way communication with the public through listening sessions and surveys.” - Presentation by Jennifer and Ebenezer. Moved to December 12 meeting.

c. Discussion of plan for Implementation Plan Goal 1.4.4 “Review city facilities for gender neutral bathrooms including schools”. Presentation by Alice.
Moved to December 12 meeting.

d. Discussion of plan for Implementation Plan Goal 2.1.2 “Establish outreach with the Chamber of Commerce”. Presentation by Cora.
Moved to future meeting.

e. Discuss the value of the “Standard Work”, expand on how to leverage this tool for onboarding new members.
Moved to future meeting.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Maggie expressed her hope that City departments and officials will act forthrightly to ensure the safety of community members who will be targeted by the incoming Administration.

8. CURRENT EVENTS

Maggie reminded committee members of a community conversation about affordable housing that she and City Councilor April Richer are co-hosting on Saturday, October 26 at 18 Florence Street. All are welcome.

November 5 is the general election. Those who haven't yet registered can do so at the polls.

9. ADJOURN

The chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:35 PM.