

Commission on Racial Justice and Equity

Thursday, February 18, 2021, 7pm

Held Via Zoom

Meeting began at 7pm. In attendance were Alina Bricklin-Goldstein, Deb Carroll, Tracy-Ann Johnson, Barret Katuna, Sue Oppenheimer, Dave Peniston, Lillian Tanski, Michael Vigeant, Jen Wang

Absent: Zabian Alarcon

Public comment: no speakers

1. Discussion and possible action on report from Communications working group

Members of communications working group shared strategic planning info from special meeting of 2/4/21. Lillian Tanski offered details regarding next press release regarding partnership with Great Blue Research. Ms. Tanski also suggested a Communications meeting with Kathryn Paquette of the Town of Glastonbury to organize our communication strategy. Date TBD.

Discussion then focused on use/management of information on social media and which commission members would be available to post updates from the commission

Jen Wang asked members to consider role of commission: collection of data or public education. Are we facilitators/data collectors or are we the “answer people”?

Deb Carroll reminded everyone of the charge of the commission as outlined in the resolution: to identify a research partner to gather data from the 4 areas identified for examination.

Ms. Wang stated that many community organizations are eager to work with the commission, and that working on the “what’s next” after data collection would be an excellent use of resources

Members also discussed how the commission becomes a presence before we ask people to respond to the survey—build community equity and interest in advance of initial surveys and town hall conversations

2. Discussion and possible action on report from Mission Statement working group

Members of Mission Statement working group discussed their initial notes from special meeting of 2/4/21. Deb Carroll pointed out that the idea was to offer options, and asked commission members to identify any language they particularly responded to or were concerned about. Ms. Carroll explained they’d followed Ms. Wang’s suggestion of framing their work in terms of “what do you want to do, for whom, and why?” Mission Statement group will be sending updated draft to full commission next week.

3. Discussion and possible action on research timeline; overview of research goals

In conversation with Michael Vigeant, commission discussed potential timing for starting research work. Mr. Vigeant explained that GB could do the work in six weeks’ time, but that the nature of the project required a longer, ore thoughtful rollout.

Mr. Vigeant explained that we should be doing outreach with our community connections now to build support for project. Potential dates for town hall conversations, in advance of the official surveys, were discussed. Decision was made to wait until late March so that Commission could work to draft trajectory of inquiry with GB team. Mr. Vigeant asked commission members, in advance of 3/4/21 commission meeting to consider the following question: If you had the entire community here to discuss this issue, what 3 questions would you ask them?

Several commission members broached the possibility of using affinity groups for the first town hall conversation, offering the opportunity for BIPOC community members to reflect in a more low-stakes setting. This met with universal support from the commission.

Mr. Vigeant suggested 1st official town hall date 30-45 days following our official launch on 3/4/21.

4. Approval of minutes from January 21st Commission Meeting

Minutes unanimously approved by all present, MJV abstained.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:05pm.