

MINUTES FROM SPECIAL MEETING

Commission on Racial Justice and Equity

Wednesday, June 9th, 2021

7:30pm

Held Via Zoom

Meeting began at 7:30pm. In attendance were Alina Bricklin-Goldstein, Deb Carroll, Tracy-Ann Johnson, Barret Katuna, Sue Oppenheimer, Dave Peniston, Lillian Tanski, Jen Wang

Absent: Xabian Alarcon

Public Comment:

Ann Bowman, 62 Morgan Drive; thanks to commission for holding this meeting;

DC: Offer context and parameters for Commission within context of town government and BOE. RJEC is a creation of, and supported by, Town Council; resources are provided by town; charge is to gather data on racism and injustice and offer action plan; it is not protocol for town side to offer commentary on Education decisions/issues, just as Ed does not comment on town decisions other than budget; commission energy needs to be put into promoting survey; I understand the desire to comment, but we are not an editorial body

JW: Comments by DC offer clarity; we need to collect data and offer recommendations; we have shared our mission statement, but our work goes beyond the literal charge of the survey; we need to build our muscle; look beyond individuals/individual incidents and look at root causes, and consider how we respond to those root causes; use of "inappropriate quote" to describe issue feels inappropriate; how do we examine our institutional role; ed statement referred to victims as individuals, as opposed to recognizing the hurt of the community as a whole; let's frame this within the context of the whole community; council doesn't comment on BOE, but we need meaningful reflection on this; council is also accountable here

Discussion on other places to promote survey: GEHMS, Open Choice Parents, GHA

SO: How do we get word out via RJEC platforms, rather than personal accounts—don't want to be personally accountable for responding online

TJ: done lots of research on education, special ed, etc. we need more clarity on the role/voice of the commission; DUALITY OF ROLES for individuals involved; we need space to offer our own commentary; need additional representation

ABG: did LT respond to emails sent to commission following survey release?

LT: not yet, now have response to offer; how do we offer both a central and individual voice; this is how members of government have to operate;

DP: mentioned survey at last BOE meeting; will give full report this coming Monday at BOE; lots of questions surrounding hire of Dr. Claybourne; pushback on RJEC work by public; importance of sticking together

JW: reflecting on DCs use of “legitimacy” regarding council support of RJEC; caution use of that word—implies work is only legit when connected to govt institutions; leadership on BOE, TC, department heads offer little BIPOC representation

PUBLIC COMMENT RESUMED

Bruce Bowman, 62 Morgan Drive; understand charge of commission. Not looking for details on incident but acknowledgement from town to address it other than “we have a survey”—ends up leaving us feeling empty; unable to articulate distress over event; maybe we get church leaders together to offer a statement; if not you, who else; was asking for RJEC to give feedback to TC, not necessarily to offer own statement

Pam Lucas, 145 Moseley Terrace; no need for details of incident; important to acknowledge pain of racist incidents; can't RJEC acknowledge the hurt of the incident? Who is going to say it?

LT: we can add to agenda; possible meeting w BOE leadership?

DP: What do you want to do? What do you want BOE to do?

LT: We want to ask for info, board to board

DC: Can we offer a detailed report to BOE?

DP: Before next meeting, let's coordinate list of points and specific talking points

JW: DP does so much liaising with so much sensitivity. Maybe have another RJEC member come in?

TJ: I like reports—data driven; what is our long-term goal; importance of school climate reports; how many experiences do not make their way into these reports?

JW: What do we imagine is the fate of the RJEC? What happens after we offer recommendations/after elections in November?

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm