

First Selectman's Diversity Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 11, 2022, 12:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://greenwichct.zoom.us/j/84470529609?pwd=VitLdGt5bkZEdFVIMFZXV2p0eWttZz09>

In Attendance:

Gary Charles, Erin Crosby, Danielle Jean-Guillaume Sittol, Darian Jones, Demetria Nelson, Gaby Rattner, Bobby Walker, Jr., Ted Pardoe, David Rabin, Karen Richard, Marek Zabriskie

Call to Order

Bobby Walker, Jr. 12:03pm

1. Approval of Minutes from December 2021

Motion: Gaby Rattner, Seconded: Gary Charles

2. Name Change Proposal

- The First Selectman proposed the following new name for the committee: “The First Selectman’s Committee on Community, Unity, and Diversity”.
- Discussion related to the alignment of the proposed new name and the committee’s approved mission focused on advancing inclusion and belonging in the Greenwich
 - Words matter:
 - How do we define “community”, “unity”, and “diversity”?
 - A new name will impact the direction of the committee and the programs it can offer
 - Concern that the advisory component of the name has been removed
 - What are the expectations of the committee? What role would the committee play in the community?
 - Concern about the exclusion of “equity” and “inclusion”
 - “Unity” can be a loaded word, especially if people don't feel included and want to be part of a community working to create unity
- First Selectman suggests that the committee’s name focus on similarities, not differences, especially in this current social and political climate and considering the extremism in the community
 - He suggests that DEI work can be controversial, and shared that concern has been raised in the community
- Discussion about the word inclusion, it is a process that encourages collective work
- The word unity does not speak to the process of developing into a unified community
- Given that some community members seem to be frustrated by the word, “diversity”, a new name was suggested: First Selectman’s CommUNITY Voices
 - The committee would still be able to represent community members to Town government and from Town government
 - The removal of words that have been perceived as controversial provides the committee with more flexibility
 - While the potential new name is very broad, the committee can be specific in in terms of programs and initiatives
 - There is no concern with the alignment of the potential new name and the mission
- Committee will have to communicate with the First Selectman for guidance on composition of this committee
 - There have inquire related to membership from several Town entities

3. Socioeconomic Panel Update

- Discussion postponed to next meeting

3. Committee Member Updates and Announcements

Youth Services

- Greenwich Student Diversity Leadership Conference to be held on Saturday, 02/05/2022

- Theme: Beyond Allyship: Igniting Agency and Action
- Keynote Speaker: Antonia Soares Thompson, Esq., Director of Racial Justice Initiatives in Middlesex County Massachusetts
- Youth will expand on last year's work focused on exploring identity, position, and power and develop action plans that can be offered to their schools
- Alma Rutgers Defining Diversity Contest
 - Still working on essay prompt
 - Considering a focus on several themes: environmental justice, ableism, or CRT (Why history matters? How history impacts the present)

Christ Church

- Anti-Racism Forum, Sunday, 02/05/2022
- Adrienne Reedy, Consultant will explore the book Credible Witness, by Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil's

YWCA Greenwich

- Honoring the Legacy, the Coretta Scott and Dr. Martin Luther King Annual Conversation, Tuesday, January 25th
 - Historically, this event was called the Dr. King event
 - Name changed to align with YWCA's mission
 - Title of program: "The Evolution of Gender"
 - Will discuss
 - The ways the idea and expression of gender has changed
 - The history of gender and language around gender
 - Gender policies in Pre-K through 12 education
 - Hope to engage families
 - The panel will include Cadence Pentheny from The Triangle Community Center, JR and Vanessa Ford, authors and LGBTQ rights advocates, and someone from the Human Rights Campaign

Greenwich High School

- Diversity Awareness Week at GHS, February 28 to March 4
 - Theme: Celebrating the Community
 - Requesting that committee members share connections with potential male speakers
 - Virtual event

5. Next Meeting Tuesday, February 8, 2022

6. Adjournment: 1:03pm