First Selectman's Diversity Advisory Committee
Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Join Zoom Meeting https://greenwichct.zoom.us/j/87475714482?pwd=NFFlU0d0Q2JGbGVTVmwvR2JTHV4d09
Password: 3924898 Or Telephone: Dial 1 646 518 9805
Webinar ID: 874 7571 4482 Password: 3924898

In Attendance:
Gayle Costello, Erin O. Crosby, Garfield Charles, Jennifer Flatow, Mary Forde, Danielle Jean-Guillaume Sittol, Sharmain Johnson, Dawn Kaam, Mary Lee Kiernan, Hale McSharry, Demetria Nelson, Ted Pardoe, Pamela Toper, Bobby Walker, Jr

Agenda Items:

Call to Order
Jennifer Flatow, Chairman & Chair Bobby Walker Jr., Vice Chair at 12:04pm

1. Approval of November 2020 and December 2020
   Motion to Approve: J. Flatow, Seconded: P. Toper

2. Sustainability Committee Guest (welcome Ali Ghiorse) Hale McSharry
   • Rescheduled for next meeting

3. Committee Member Updates Committee Members
   • Current membership: 20, waiting for responses from a 2 potential members

YWCA
   • New member Erin O. Crosby, Director of Women's Empowerment and Racial Justice
     o A resource to community, will be leading Center for Equity and Justice
     o Wealth of experience working with marginalized groups: women, people of color, different communities
     o Focused on liberation work for all people
     o Will spend the next few months dedicated to listening and learning to understand Town from a socio-political, historical, geographic standpoint
     o Will meet with community partners to get their perspectives
   • Annual Dr. King event: Overcoming Racial Heath Disparities: During and Beyond COVID-19
     o Panel discussion moderated by Tiffany Donaldson, CEO of The Connecticut Health Foundation
     o Thursday, January 21 at 7pm
     o Request for co-sponsorship from FSDAC members

4. Discussion on Civility and Capitol incident
   • Reflection on the historic election in Georgia and violence in Washington, DC
   • How will schools address this incident?
   • Concerns about state capitals and inauguration
   • Heightened awareness, civil unrest during a global pandemic
   • YWCA put out a statement within 24 hours with all other YWCA’s in the state
     o Contrast between what happened at the Capitol and police handling of BLM demonstrations
       • Systemic racism and white privilege
     o Recommitted to stand against racism
     o Must reflect on how white nationalism and insurrection are intertwined
   • Faith leaders invited people to pray together
   • National Council of Churches, a broad group of church leaders, to communicate with VP for removal of president
     o Faith leaders reflecting on message to deliver on Sunday
• First Selectman released a statement almost immediately
• National Day of Racial Healing, Tuesday, 01/19 hosted by the Kellogg Foundation
  o An opportunity to access resources from thought leaders
  o Moving toward racial healing
• Community needs safe opportunities for all to share their observations and reflections respectfully and constructively, perhaps there is an opportunity for FDSAC to host such an event, the YWCA can facilitate
• Disappointment that First Selectman’s statement did not mention President Trump by name or mention content of the protests, a group of Americans questioning the validity an election
  o Need accountability
• Social studies teachers assist students in processing this information
  o Making connections in class and having authentic conversations
• How do we deal with these issues on a regular basis at any institution moving forward?
  o This committee can serve as a resource: materials, activities, or spokesperson to engage with schools
  o Promote discussions to support educators who facilitate difficult conversations
  o People are afraid to appear wrong, offensive, or uninformed
• Greenwich Academy offered an open zoom session on the night of January 6, offered space for community reflection
• FSDAC to consider planning a community open zoom
  o Establish community norms/rules, those who violate community norms can be muted, removed
  o Learn to be comfortable with people being uncomfortable, accept discomfort as part of the process
  o Must consider the committee’s capacity for engaging in such difficult conversations
• Comment on revising of mission statement
  o Need to develop shared definitions of “equity”, “racial equity”, “inclusion”, “diversity”, and “race” and “racism”
  o Understanding of these complex terms/ideas are not necessarily shared, making discussions difficult
  o Need to create a community lexicon so we can authentically and clearly talk about such challenging issues
• Consider a listening tour
  o To gain and understanding of perspectives of different communities
• Follow up questions for community conversation, we will need to identify a fair, stern moderator
  o Should students be part of the conversation?
  o Should this be a conversation to support adults in engaging with youth?

5. Mission Statement Discussion/Project Committee Members
• Will have special meeting, small group to work on mission statement and language for website

6. Next Meeting - February 16, 2021

7. Adjournment Bobby Walker Jr. & Jen Flatow

8. Adjourn: 1:10pm