First Selectman's Diversity Advisory Committee  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 12:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting: https://greenwichct.zoom.us/j/88208476721?pwd=c0xqdUswUGZI6pCN1UxeHdXdk9nUT09

Or Dial 1 646 518 9805 Webinar ID: 882 0847 6721 Password: 0936328

In Attendance:

Agenda Items:

Call to Order
Jennifer Flatow, Chairman, 12:04pm

1. Approval of March 2021 Meeting Minutes
   Motion to Approve: M. Zabriskie, 2nd: J. Flatow

2. Statistical HR Report, Erica Mahoney Asst. Director HR, Town of Greenwich
   - Mission of HR Dept: Promote equal opportunity, ensure equality
     o race, gender, sexual orientation, medical disability, and other areas of historical discrimination do not impact hiring
   - Data provided shows a snapshot in time, retrieved March 1, 2021, representing 3414 active employees within Greenwich
     o Majority from BOE (2038 employees)
     o Data captures major town departments
     o Departments with 20 or fewer employees (Law Dept., HR Dept., Tax Assessor, Tax Collector) not included.
     o Not a lot of turnover in the town of Greenwich
   - Town of Greenwich Demographic Data
     o Compared to Census data because cannot access State of Connecticut demographic data
     o Categories consistent with those used by federal government/EEO for required annual reporting
     o Demographic data is reported voluntarily, cannot mandate
       ▪ Gender: Male, Female, Not Specified or Prefer Not to Say
     o Race/Ethnicity: Non-Caucasian/White, African-American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Not Specified or Two or More Races, select more than one
       o BOE: March 2021: 15.8% non-White, increase from 14.87% in December 2018
       o Fire Dept: no real change since December 2018
         ▪ Need to pursue diversity recruitment.
         ▪ New Fire Chief and New Asst Fire Chief considering outreach and career fairs
     o Humans Services: small department, change in one staff member significantly impacts percentages
     o Police Dept increased efforts in hiring a diverse workforce
   - Request for more granular data
     o Request for comparison of demographic data of administrative positions and officer positions
     o Other departments: comparison of leadership or executive level positions compared to other positions in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender
     o Comment that data can misrepresent population since Latino/Hispanic has its own race standards, can be White and Hispanic/Black and Hispanic
       ▪ Federal government form is not aligned with Census.
       ▪ Is there an opportunity to add a form or different way to collect more accurate information related to race/ethnicity and gender (non-binary)?
       ▪ Is there any guidance related to people who select two races?
Consider inviting the superintendent or a representative of the HR Dept of Greenwich public schools to get a snapshot of what is happening in school system.

Consider representation of disabled people

Look at teacher representation in independent schools
- Candidate concerns related to cost of living in Greenwich and raising children of color
- Retention of diverse teachers

Speak to Katie DeLuca about efforts of Planning and Zoning Dept.
- Affordable housing

Consider students’ experiences
- Lack of educators/mentors of color

Plan to review HR data every six months
- Trend for town departments to hire bilingual (English/Spanish)
- BOE and clerical support jobs

3. Diversity Training, Erin Crosby Director of Women’s Empowerment & Racial Justice, YWCA Greenwich
- Start developing foundational knowledge and language around the concepts of race, racism, and anti-racism
- Beyond an intellectual framework
- What does this mean in terms of identity development?
  - Identity development frames mental models, leading into the development of policies and practices
- Goal: achieve outcomes that are beneficial to people despite racial and gender identity yet, consider racial and gender identity
- Group reflection: When you think about having a conversation about race, racism, and anti-racism, how do you feel?
  - Guarded
  - Tense
  - I am going to learn, overwhelmed.
  - It is visceral for us; we feel this in our being.
- Lean into discomfort
- Community agreements
  - I statements
  - We are part of American socialization, a hierarchy of human value that some people are more important than others, based on certain identities.
  - Anti-racism requires that we dismantle that construct.
- Recognize that there are power dynamics based on race, gender, age, and ability.
  - We want to disrupt those whenever we can.
- Make space and take space, some people are comfortable taking up space.
  - Safe space, Brave space
    - No harm will come to you
    - Encourage being brave enough to be vulnerable, brave enough to listen when you would typically speak.
    - Be open to having your views challenged.
    - Honor differences between intent and impact.
    - Own the impact of what we do.
    - Accept non closure, this work is iterative, evolves and reveals itself over time.
      - We must attend to it as we go.
- Today’s content is from the DIVE modules, Everyday Anti-racism
  - Being introspective is part of being anti-racist.
  - Must attend to personal mental models and how you got here. Otherwise, it will be difficult to understand and create something new.
- Vox Video: Myth About Race Debunked in Three Minutes
  - First person to attempt to categorize humans according to race was a German scientist.
• Came up with five different groups according to physical appearance and geographic origin of their ancestors Americans of European descent
  • The idea that there are different races helped resolve the contradiction between a natural right to freedom and slavery.
    • If whites were their own distinct category, then they could feel a lot better about denying freedom to people who they labeled Black.
  • As political priorities changed, definitions of race in America adjusted.
    • If you are Mexican by birth or ancestry in US in 1929, you were considered white.
    • 1940 census changed that to non-white to limit immigration later.
    • When US needed to increase its labor force during World War II, switched back to white.
    • What it takes to be “Black” varies wildly throughout the country
      o from ¼ TO 1/16 to one drop of African ancestry
      o In 2000, govt decided that Americans could be more than one race, added multiracial category Census.
        ▪ Confusing: can look one way and identify another way
        ▪ There is no race chromosome.
  • Medical community’s links race to health outcomes
    o Using race as a substitute for other factors such as where your ancestors came from or experiences of people who may have been putting the same racial group.
    o Sickle cell anemia, for example
      ▪ The disease is linked to areas with high rates of malaria, which include some parts of Europe and Asia and addition to Africa.
      ▪ It is not actually about race at all.
  • Racial categories to which were assigned can determine real life experiences, they can drive political outcomes and they can even make the difference between life and death.
  • Understanding that racial categories are made up can give us an important perspective on where racism came from in the first place.
  • Reflections on Video
    o Fluidity of whiteness
    o Blurring of lines, can be difficult to differentiate races.
    o Granular confusion for individuals related to the Census, people may not be sure of their category.
  • Checking a box
    o Implications of and difference between how one racially identifies versus how they are racially categorized.
  • Definition of race:
    o Specious system of human classification invented by Europeans who would come to be categorized as white.
    o Shared physical characteristics, including skin color hair texture and bone structure are used to reinforce the idea of race, but may not provide accurate information regarding racial identity.
    o A social construct, but with a real lived reality, it was created, and has real implications, such as racism.
      ▪ Comment: while race is a construct, the implications are real
      ▪ It comes with certain benefits and serves to categorize some people as higher on the hierarchy of human value and other as lower.
  • Image on screen people wearing T shirts, denoting census racial categories at different times.
    o Erasure of culture, does not honor geography, does not honor culture.
    o Free white vs white (indentured servant)
    o Black, negro, and black, little fluctuation
      ▪ Talking about race on the Black/White binary
        • Whiteness and Blackness does not honor different racial and ethnic identities that are affected by whiteness and blackness.
  • Discussion about people categorized as white but were not always white, the cost of racism for white people.
    o Italians
    o Irish
    o Jewish people
      ▪ Over time became more American to gain benefits: economic, social, and political.
- They moved toward whiteness.
  - Last names changed.
  - Language changed.
  - Religion changed.
- Reflection until our next meeting (for those who identify as white or have skin privilege): What is it that your culture, your family, your people group may have had to give up becoming white?
  - Govt creates opportunities for certain people to opt into whiteness because it brings political advantage.
  - We do not see people move into Blackness because we inherently understand that there is a lack of political, economic, and social capital with being Black.
  - If you are moving toward whiteness you are also moving away from Blackness and other racial and ethnic categories that present as brown or Black
  - What is the cost of your racial identity?

4. Committee Member Updates Committee Members
- To be emailed to group

5. Next Meeting - April 6, 2021

7. Adjournment: Jennifer Flatow, 1:02pm