First Selectman's Diversity Advisory Committee
Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting: https://greenwichct.zoom.us/j/94880648302?pwd=MWFkczNlalQ0TXoxNlhRSVJmMUI2QT09
Password: 6564313, Dial: 1 646 518 9805, Webinar ID: 948 8064 8302

In Attendance:
Fred Camillo, Garfield Charles, Jennifer Flatow, Mary Forde, Danielle Jean-Guillaume Sittol,

Agenda Items:

Call to Order
Jennifer Flatow, Chairman at 12:00pm

1. Approval of June 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes
   Motion to Approve: J. Flatow, 2nd: Rev. T. Pardoe

2. Increase in Community Interest
   • Reflection on community interest in response to Black Lives Matter, increased tensions in the country related to police brutality, and the pandemic
   • Some members of the committee attended peaceful protests in Greenwich
   • Members of Junior League and Bruce Museum reached out to J. Flatow, want to be involved in the Committee but First Selectman appoints members
   • Need to review Committee’s bylaws so that the membership process is transparent
   • Need to define the mission and vision of the First Selectman’s Diversity Advisory Committee
     o Must engage community in a broader conversation about Committee’s mission and vision
     o Members must be able to communicate the group’s goals to other organizations
   • In general, Greenwich community is looking for leadership with respect to diversity and has expectations of the Committee
   • High school and college students reached out to engage First Selectman’s Diversity Advisory Committee
     o Youth membership is inappropriate for this group
     o G. Charles stressed that students should focus on engagement in their schools
     o ML Kiernan shared that two GHS graduates are partnering with Greenwich Alliance, Greenwich Library, and YWCA to offer a student panel discussion event
     o In August, YWCA hosted a conversation inspired by the Black@ Instagram threads. This conversation included GPS Superintendent, Head of Diversity at Greens Farms Academy, a teacher at Staples who lives in Greenwich.
       ▪ Moderated by Antonia Thompson, head of Youth Services in Stamford

3. Youth Interest/Youth Commission Update
   • Danielle connected with Brunswick senior who wants to create a First Selectman’s Youth Diversity Advisory Committee. He seems frustrated with this committee’s process.
   • The young man was invited to partner with the First Selectman’s Youth Commission and to assist in planning the town-wide Student Diversity Leadership Conference
   • The student has committed to connecting with adult and student diversity leaders in all of the town high schools
   • The FSYC will discuss planning for their Student Diversity Leadership Conference at their board meeting tonight.
   • Another student, a graduate of GHS, sent a PPT presentation related to social justice concerns in her education but there was no further communication. Jennifer might reach out to her but she might be in college.
     o G. Charles shared that this student might not continue to pursue this project.

4. 2020-2021 Programming Ideas
First Selectman’s Diversity Advisory Committee must consider how to address many pressing “hot topics” and anticipates little change in sense of urgency in the coming days, weeks and months

Greenwich Fellowship of Clergy collectively working to determine how various clergy can engage and support community concerns

YWCA offered virtual opportunities in July and August to address pressing issues

Social Justice project tabled

J. Flatow shared that ELM records has a diversity contest

Programs that are “baked in” this Committee’s calendar
  - Greenwich Student Diversity Leadership Conference, February 2021
  - Alma Rutgers Defining Diversity Contest, (tentatively) May 2021, hopefully live at YWCA gallery

Given health and safety concerns, Committee must consider virtual programming. Some ideas:
  - Virtual Town Hall focusing on diversity
  - Conversations related to upcoming election
  - B. Walker: Discussion on civility in these divisive times, basic respect that is not communicated in the national rhetoric, messaging to youth
    - G. Charles: look at social/emotional impact, invite a psychologist and build on skills and strategies to develop community’s understanding of civility
    - D. Kaan: unprecedented time, we must address emotional stress and develop appropriate coping strategies, the kids are watching
  - B. Walker’s idea: event with people in different shirts, watch reaction to Trump/Pence, Biden/Harris, Black Lives Matter, All Lives Matter shirts: explore answers to “How do you feel right now?”
    - Before rational thought, so many triggers
    - Anticipating reactions to political mask at school
    - Need parameters on self-policing, communicating emotions
  - B Walker: wants to be part of a committee rooted in optimism and idealism
  - M Forde: Elementary school norms: “be safe, be honest care for self and others, let go and move on”
    - Faculty, cabinet, and leadership meetings start with these norms, a neutral way to remind community of expectations
    - This committee can develop a common, positive phrase that sets a standard and expectations
    - In June First Selectman’s put out a statement on diversity
      - Committee to develop statement communicating the value of all opinions, respect for diversity, obligation to vote
      - “Be kind, we can disagree, but be kind”
      - Create short and simple message as a teaser for future, deeper community conversation
      - D Kaan will see if Junior League will also put out short statements, JL currently doing a 21-day diversity
      - D Rabin: “Know Your ABC, Always Be Civil!”

Need to look at calendar to schedule community conversation, six to eight weeks to plan

Communicate through Committee’s network, social media, and organizations’ websites
  - Hale to set up Committee’s Facebook the group

5. Update of Contact Information/Attendance/Membership
   - Request for Committee members to update contact information in Google Doc created by J. Flatow
     - Attendance will determine openings, new member recommendations can be made
   - Updated list on the website

6. Next Meeting (10/13/20) Topics
   - ML Kiernan: To complement mission to eliminate racism and power women programming, the YW is creating a new Center for Equity and Justice and hiring a Director of Women’s Empowerment Racial Justice
     - Anticipating much collaboration in the future

7. Adjourn: 12:54pm