

Town of Boxborough
Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
Conducted on Zoom
November 18, 2020

PRESENT: Wes Fowlks, Member; John Fallon, Member; Peishan Bartley, Member; Lovingsky Jasmin, Member; Mary Sullivan, Member; Nora Michnovez, Member; Lakshmi Kaja, Member; Amy Osenar, Member

ALSO PRESENT: Olivia Jones, Jermey Matthews

ABSENT: Song Issah

At 6:47 PM Wes Fowlks called the meeting to order.

The committee started with introductions. Of note the members had diverse backgrounds and prior experience with town boards and committees. Additionally, the members noted how excited they were to be a part of the committee and looked forward to working together to help the town.

The committee then reviewed the Open Meeting Law Guide that is available on the State's website under the Office of The Attorney General. Of note, the committee discussed not replying all to emails sent by other members, what constituted a quorum for discussion, keeping and approving meeting minutes in a timely fashion, posting agendas and other important points regarding the Open Meeting Law.

The committee then discussed the two officer roles within the committee the Chair and the Clerk, and the responsibilities assigned to each. Jasmin asked what the cadence the officers were elected within the committee, and Fowlks responded with they are usually voted annually after the Select Board appointment marathon in May.

Fowlks nominated Jasmin for the role of Chair, Seconded by Kaja, Jasmin accepted the nomination and there was no further discussion.

**Roll Call Vote: Fallon – Aye, Sullivan – Aye, Kaja – Aye, Bartley – Aye, Michnovez – Aye, Osenar – Aye, Jasmin – Aye, Fowlks -- Aye
Approved 8-0**

Fowlks nominated Michnovez for the role of Clerk, Seconded by Jasmin. Michnovez accepted the nomination and there was no further discussion.

**Roll Call Vote: Fallon – Aye, Sullivan – Aye, Kaja – Aye, Bartley – Aye, Michnovez – Aye, Osenar – Aye, Jasmin – Aye, Fowlks -- Aye
Approved 8-0**

The committee congratulated the new officers and proceeded with the meeting, and also noted that Michnovez is most likely the youngest person in the Town's history to serve as an officer on a committee.

The committee started to discuss goals and objectives for the committee to start working on. Osenar suggested that the committee looks at affordable housing and addressing that in Town Planning. Member Fowlks suggested that the committee works with the Affordable Housing Committee to help achieve this goal. Member Fallon also asked what was meant by affordable housing and what was the goal of the affordable housing. The committee deliberated on the question and decided that more research was needed to answer the question and find the best way to advocate for that within town.

Approved at at the 12/15/20 Meeting

Jasmin brought up the recent decision by the School Committee to remove the mascot and asked if there was something the committee could do to support the School Committee or to suggest ways to start bringing unity among the community around this divisive topic.

Kaja suggested that the committee educate residents on diversity and upcoming events through a newsletter or some other publication means. Fowlks suggested the Boxborough Bee as a possible venue for the communication but suggested that the committee work across multiple platforms and forms of media to distribute information. Kaja also recommended that the committee make Library recommendations for reading on different topics as they relate to goals of the committee and raising awareness among residents as to the diverse cultural backgrounds of the residents.

Bartley stressed how important communication and outreach is, as the committee can do work, however if the committee is not able to broadcast the work and inform residents it will be difficult to accomplish the committee's goals. Bartley also noted that with her work with the Library that it is difficult to reach several different demographics within the town and that maybe the committee should investigate how best to reach the different demographics. Fowlks informed the committee that the Select Board will be sending out a survey that will be in the Town's annual Census that goes out to residents to find a way to better communicate with residents of the town, and that the committee could utilize and or augment this work.

Jones recommended that the committee look at other communities to see what work they have done in Diversity Equity and Inclusion to see if any of their work and or findings could be applicable to Boxborough. The committee agreed this would be a good thing to do to build context for the committee.

Fowlks summarized the following goal proposals from the committee and suggested the committee review them at the next meeting after having some time to think and review.

- Increase communication channels in the town
- Inclusive newsletter/outreach for means of education
- Raise awareness with affordable housing & define what the goal is
- Community outreach and support
- Survey of other communities to propose changes in town

The committee then decided on a next meeting date of December 15th at 7:00 PM via Zoom

8:12 PM Peishan moved to adjourn. Seconded by Jasmin

Roll Call Vote: Fallon – Aye, Bartley – Aye, Sullivan – Aye, Jasmin – Aye, Michnovez – Aye, Kaja – Aye, Osenar – Aye, Fowlks -- Aye

Approved 8-0

Exhibits:

1. 2017 Open Meeting Law Guide
2. Responsibilities of Officers
3. Diversity Equity & Inclusion Charter

Approved at at the 12/15/20 Meeting