

## The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Annual Report 2022

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was established in 2020 by the Hadley Select Board as part of its commitment to creating a more welcoming community that can serve the needs of a diverse population. The work of the CDEI has been shaped by their Mission Statement, approved by the Select Board on August 5, 2020. In that statement, the CDEI was charged to:

- **Advise, promote, and foster the development of policies, programs and activities** directed towards anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Explore, develop, and make recommendations for strategies related to issues of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion for residents and workers within the Town of Hadley** including hiring practices, recruiting strategies, training, continuing education, and professional development for Town employees, and elected and appointed positions.
- **Focus their efforts on issues of housing, education, public health and safety, community involvement, access to community resources, transportation and other community initiatives and concerns** that the CDEI and the Select Board deem appropriate and necessary.

In support of its mission, the CDEI engaged in the following activities during the 2022 calendar year:

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Program Offerings**

In honor of Juneteenth, recognized as a national holiday on June 16, 2021, and Indigenous People's Day, honoring America's first inhabitants, the CDEI co-sponsored two educational films, open to the community. Participants who attended the programs expressed appreciation and interest in future DEI film screenings.

#### **Juneteenth Program – June 16, 2022 @ 7 pm, Hadley Public Library** (20 attendees)

*High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America: episode 4: Freedom, (2021)*

*Co-sponsored with Hadley Library, via the Netflix single public showing agreement.*

In this beautifully narrated celebration of Black history, culture and cuisine in America, food writer Stephen Satterfield travels to Texas. Satterfield enjoys BBQ and soul food with scholar Adrian Miller, and shares celebratory Juneteenth desserts with chef Jerrelle Guy, author of *Black Girl Baking: Wholesome Recipes Inspired by a Soulful Upbringing*. Satterfield meets up with the Northeastern Trail riders and discovers the heritage of Black cowboys and the rodeo tradition.

#### **Indigenous People's Day Program – October 14, 2022 @ 12:15 pm, Hadley Senior Center** (12 attendees)

*Gather* [www.gather.com](http://www.gather.com).

Co-sponsored with Hadley Council on Aging/Senior Center via the Hadley Library *Kanopy* account.

In this powerful documentary of exploitation and resilience, *Gather* explores how Indigenous Americans are healing the cultural and spiritual identities denied them through centuries of genocide. The film introduces Indigenous people across generations, who are reclaiming sovereignty over ancestral food systems.

#### **Hadley World's Fair – September 23, 2022, from 5:00-7:00 pm, Hadley Public Library**

Co-sponsored with Hadley Learns, the Hadley Council on Aging

## **Town Policy Recommendation**

In response to a social media post by an elected official in May 2022, the CDEI recommended to Town Administrator Carolyn Brennan that Hadley develop a Code of Conduct to establish standards of behavior for employees, elected officials and committee members. The Code of Conduct was developed and approved by the Select Board on November 16, 2022.

### **Issues of Concern**

The CDEI identified affordable housing as a priority issue. Limited moderate and low-income housing options negatively impact the diversity of Hadley neighborhoods by severely limiting the populations of lower-income wage earners (disproportionally people of color), first-time home buyers, young families, single individuals, and senior citizens. In 2021 the CDEI met with Bill Dwyer, Clerk of the Town of Hadley Planning Board who clearly laid out obstacles to expanded affordable housing - current zoning restrictions, wetlands/flood zones, limited wastewater capacity, lack of builder interest in the development of smaller property, among other factors. Despite these constraints, the CDEI continues to believe that increased affordable housing is necessary to realize the Hadley Select Board's commitment to creating a more welcoming community that can serve the needs of a diverse population.

The CDEI met with Alexis Breiteneicher, Executive Director and Laura Baker, Real Estate Development Director (via Zoom) of Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) on October 25, 2022, to discuss the proposed affordable housing project at the Econo Lodge. The CDEI appreciated the opportunity to learn about these 51 apartment units and to discuss the lottery process by which units are awarded. The CDEI concluded the year committed to additional reflection and discussion.

### **Conclusion**

As a new Hadley Committee, we wish to express appreciation to those who have assisted us to launch and sustain the CDEI. We are grateful to former Select Board member, Christian Stanley, who promoted the formation of the CDEI and to the Select Board for their ongoing commitment to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We appreciate administrative direction from Carolyn Brennan and ongoing support from Jessica Spanknebel, Jennifer James Sanders, and Alex LaMarche. We want to thank Patrick Borezo, Hayley Woods, and Violet Suska for co-sponsoring educational programs, *Hadley Learns* for providing outstanding DEI learning opportunities, and the Library and the Senior Center for hosting our programs and meetings.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the leadership of our inaugural Chair E. Wayne Abercrombie who remains on the CDEI and successor Co-chairs Margaret Mastrangelo and Kayla Werlin, inaugural CDEI members who in September 2022, moved on to other professional and community leadership roles. We are excited to welcome our newest member Megan Relin, who was appointed to CDEI on December 21, 2022. We are committed to expanding the CDEI, and we invite other Hadley residents to consider joining us. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Hadley Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Dunn, Chair  
E. Wayne Abercrombie  
Joanne Goding  
Megan Relin  
Pat Rissmeyer, Clerk  
Sarah Strong