

MINUTES OF THE 4/4/22 MEETING

Items highlighted indicate CDEI member action needed

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was scheduled at 5:15 pm by Zoom

What: Town of Hadley – Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

When: April 4, 2022/ 5:15 pm

Where: Zoom

Who: Co-Chair Kayla Werlin (KW), Co-Chair Margaret Mastrangelo (MM), E. Wayne Abercrombie (WA), Mark Dunn, (MD), Jane Nevinsmith (JN)*, Clerk Pat Rissmeyer (PR), Sarah Strong (SS)

Absent: Ada Bouthet (AB)*, Amy Lanham (AL)*, Joanne Goding (JG)

*Non-voting member

Welcome and call to order

Co-Chair KW called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm

1. Clerk's report

The group reviewed the minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2022. MM moved to approve the minutes, and her motion was seconded by MD. Minutes were approved 5-0.

2. Hopkins report

No report

3. Old business

a) *Meeting with Chief Mason (MM & PR)*

KW invited PR to report on the meeting with Chief Mike Mason.

PR shared that at the invitation of Chief Mike Mason, she, MM and JN are serving on a Work Group which met in the Senior Center on 3/17/22 with Hadley Town Leaders. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the **Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)** report describing police stop data collected February-December 2020 (a timeframe that aligns with COVID). In extending the invitation, Chief Mason made it clear that he was looking for individuals who could be objective and give honest feedback on the data.

Background Information on EOPSS report

- By way of context, PR provided some background information on the police stop data collection and analysis. She noted that it was **collected by Massachusetts Uniform Citations**, provided by the Registry of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and **analyzed by** researchers at **Salem State University and Worcester State University**. Usable data from 280 police agencies, including the Hadley Police Department were utilized in the analysis. The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) released a report describing the research findings. **The goal of the study was to look for potential patterns and possible racial disparities in traffic stops.**
- PR characterized the statistical analysis utilized in the study as complex. It is **based on the Veil of Darkness (VoD) test** developed by renowned statisticians Jeffrey Grogger and Greg Ridgeway was published in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association (2006)*. **The VoD test** has been used by police departments across the country and has come to be known as ‘the gold standard. The VoD hypothesis assumes **that at night, during ‘the veil of darkness’** a police officer has greater difficulty determining the race of a driver before making a traffic stop. **Conversely, during the daylight, a police**

officer can more easily determine the race of a driver before making a traffic stop. According to Grogger and Ridgeway, if conditions between night and day are similar, i.e., traffic patterns, driving behavior, exposure to police etc., then comparing the race distribution of drivers stopped during the day and the race distribution of drivers stopped during the night can assess for racial profiling.

- PR shared that in the Commonwealth of MA 2020 study, researchers found **statistically significant data to suggest that Black/African American and Hispanic drivers were more likely to be stopped during the day than at night by three police agencies and Hadley was one of those agencies.** This information was first reported by the media on February 7, 2020. It was reported with some cautions.
- The Salem State Research Team acknowledged **that the data are not perfect** (especially this year) and therefore **do not “prove anything,”** i.e., Disparity does not equal discrimination or profiling but instead serve as a starting point for further learning and discussion. In response to questions from the media, Salem State University researcher Gina Curcio, Ph.D. stated, “.... **We caution that our findings do not confirm racial profiling** and any incidents of statistical significance **could have a variety of explanations other than officer bias.**” These factors may include factors beyond the scope of the data, including whether the stop was discretionary or due to a radio call, motorist behavior, or the trigger offense.” **Dr. Curcio stated further, “This baseline research should serve as a starting point for deeper understanding, continued discussions, and further reflection.”**

Hadley Work Group Discussion *Uniform Data Citation Analysis Report*

PR reported that at the Work Group meeting, **Chief Mason delivered a comprehensive 43-slide Power Point presentation** titled *Uniform Data Citation Analysis Report*.

PR suggested that Chief Mason’s presentation demonstrated that he and the other members of the Hadley Police Department

- ✓ Studied (in great depth) the report and the findings including the original Grogger and Ridgeway article
- ✓ Consulted repeatedly with researchers at Salem State, law enforcement and criminal justice colleagues, (including a criminal justice professor in NY)
- ✓ Dedicated enormous effort and department resources to gather data from study, replicate stop data, examine it stop by stop, determine the exact times of daylight stops, provide camera footage of traffic stops in high-speed area, etc.

Next Steps following Hadley Work Group Meeting

- Chief Mason requested that each person in attendance at the meeting complete an anonymous electronic survey of ten questions related to the Uniform Data Citation Analysis Report. He will be using these responses to further inform his work.
- Chief Mason reported that he intends to engage in additional meetings with members of the Hadley community – business owners, religious establishments like the Hampshire Mosque as well as with Senator Comerford and Representative Carey.

PR concluded by saying that she believes that Chief Mason is invested in using these data as an opportunity for learning and improvement and most importantly to ensure bias-free policing in the Town of Hadley. PR suggested that the CDEI invite him to a future meeting perhaps in April or May.

CDEI Discussion of Work Group Meeting

KW asked about the percentage of people of color represented on the Work Group. PR stated that she doesn't have that data but that the group appeared to be predominantly white. JN indicated that like so many New England towns, Hadley has a small population of people of color. The CDEI members indicated an interest in finding ways to engage racially underrepresented people in conversations on issues of equity and inclusion. KW used the virtual meeting to invite anyone watching to please send us feedback as the CDEI is eager to learn. SS suggested that the CDEI consider opening one of our summer meetings to invite people to join us.

MM and JN shared some of their takeaways from the Work Group meeting on 3/17/22:

- JN reminded the CDEI that in addition to Hadley, two other MA towns (Ludlow and Foxboro) were identified as having a statistically significant percentage of citations to Black and Hispanic drivers during the Veil of Darkness hours. JN suggested that these three towns have destinations that draw non-resident drivers: Ludlow (Six Flags), Foxboro (Gillette Stadium) and Hadley (Five Colleges, restaurants, and retail operations).
- MM reported that over 100,000 vehicles drive through Hadley daily.
- MM reminded the group that the data collection was aligned with the isolation period of COVID and suggested that it is possible that a disproportionate number of people of color, who were employed as 'essential workers' may have been on the road.
- MD shared that he is impressed that Chief Mason has chosen to 'shine a light' on rather than skirting the issue. MD suggested that this is likely not a textbook situation.
- The group discussed the data collection and analysis and MM reported that the Chief and the LT looked at the entire data set.
- JN commended Chief Mason for his leadership and informed the group that the researchers cautioned against drawing conclusions.
- JN invited the CDEI and the viewing audience to attend the Hadley Matters Open Meeting and Question Session on 4.7.22 at 3 pm in the Senior Center.

MD thanked PR for a comprehensive report

b) Update on questionnaire for reporting and resolving allegations of discriminatory behavior: Mark & Wayne

WA reported that on behalf of the CDEI, he wrote to Hadley community leaders asking what systems or processes they have in place for handling grievances of perceived incidents of prejudice, bias and/or discrimination. WA explained that the CDEI interest arose from an interest in assembling a resource directory to direct people to the proper municipal contact since the CDEI doesn't have the authority to investigate reports or enforce corrective action. WA requested the title, phone number and email of the organization's point of contact as well as a brief description of the process if one is in place.

PR requested a list of the community leaders who received this questionnaire. WA offered to send the list to PR by email. (NOTE: this list is below):

Pellisier & Davis (Conservation Commission) McCarthy (Dept. of Public Works)
Anne McKenzie (School Superintendent)
Wm. Dwyer (Planning Board)
Daniel Zdonek, HJr. (Board of Assessors)
Tom Quinlan (Bldg. commissioner, Zoning enforcement/Housing Authority)

c) Juneteenth observation

KW reported that she reached out to the religious organizations in Hadley to request support for a CDEI organized Juneteenth observation. The Pastor of the North Hadley Congregational Church indicated interest, and Patrick from the Hadley Library offered space. KW shared that at least three MA towns have celebrations – Dorchester, Marblehead, and Amherst. Amherst has a committee dedicated to the event and offers a day-long celebration.

CDEI Discussion of Juneteenth – ideas for further consideration

The group brainstormed potential next steps suggesting a movie series, food on the Common and the ringing of church bells. JN suggested the Senior Center as a venue. The group discussed ways to engage the greater community: area businesses, organizations like the Hopkins Academy Diversity club, the Porter Phelps Huntington House Museum, Hadley Learns and area historians like Professor Miller at UMass Amherst. JN suggested that we invite Scott Merzbach to write a piece for the Hampshire Gazette

4. New Business:

The group affirmed our interest in finding concrete ways to engage others in the work of the CDEI.

5. Open Agenda:

JN invited participation in the upcoming Climate Change events; she encouraged people to register for the Climate Change Day events on 4/23 from 10-4, and to grab a trash bag and participate in the town-wide cleanup of Hadley.

The group affirmed KW's suggestion that the CDEI consider handing out a flyer at the next Town Meeting.

6. Next meeting date

KW announced that the next meeting will be held on Monday, May 2, 2022

7. Adjournment

KW thanked everyone for their participation and WA made a motion for adjournment and MD seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by a vote of 6-0.

Minutes submitted by Pat Rissmeyer, Clerk, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion