

MINUTES OF THE 9/13/21 MEETING

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: September 13, 2021 / 5:15 pm

Where: Zoom

Who: Co-Chair Kayla Werlin (KW), Co-Chair Margaret Mastrangelo (MM), E. Wayne Abercrombie (WA), Clerk Pat Rissmeyer (PR), Ada Bouthet (AB)*, Mark Dunn, (MD), Amy Lanham (AL)*, Sarah Strong (SS)

Absent: Co-Chair Jane Nevinsmith (JN), Joanne Goding (JG)

Guest: Jason Burns, Social Studies Teacher at Hopkins Academy

*Non-voting member

Welcome and call to order

Kayla called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

Clerk's report

- The group reviewed and approved the minutes of the July 12, 2021 and August 2, 2021. For the August 2, 2021 minutes, KW noted that the minutes should state that Jason Burns not Patrick Borezo has agreed to work with the CDEI on the Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day event.
- July 12, 2021 minutes – MM moved to approve, SS seconded, all in favor; August 2, 2021 minutes – KW. KW moved to approve with edit as noted above, SS seconded, all in favor.

Old Business

Indigenous Peoples Study – Hopkins Academy

- Kayla introduced Jason Burns, Social Studies Teacher at Hopkins Academy. Jason described his work with Hopkins Academy sophomores on examining 'creation stories' 'historical context' and 'world view' beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition especially in relation to indigenous people. Mr. Burns' students will be selecting a native tribe to study and will be preparing a poster for presentation. Within this assignment, the students will be reviewing maps, journals, and historical accounts of Columbus' travels. The event will be held on November 9, 2021 at the Hadley Library. The students will discuss the origins of Columbus Day and Indigenous People's Day. The group expressed to Jason great interest and support and offered to assist. Jason invited the group to promote the poster session (that will be posted on the Hopkins website and Facebook page) and affirmed interest in providing food for the event. Mr. Burns clarified that the students are not serving as 'advocates' but as 'learners'. He stated that the Hadley Library will be hosting an indigenous peoples night.

Hopkins report

- Ada reported (and Amy elaborated) on the list of goals that the members of the Hopkins Diversity Club has proposed for the academic year. These include discussions on a variety of topics including internment camps in China; Black Lives Matter; girls in sports; gender issues and sexuality; the crisis in Afghanistan (charity event). The Club hopes to bring back the Hopkins Multicultural Celebration. The Club is interested in engaging in discussion members of the Hadley community with Hopkins students and teachers for some community-based initiatives like lawn signs displays throughout the Valley and the erection of a peace pole on the Hopkins campus or in the community. Kayla affirmed the work of the Diversity Club expressing gratitude for the energy and passion that Ada and Amy bring to the CDEI. The others members of the CDEI echoed Kayla's sentiment and thanked Ada and Amy for their report.

Survey/Study Committee

- The group discussed and affirmed the survey/study outline prepared by Wayne and Pat (see attached). The group decided that the next step will be to summarize the CDEI conversations (recorded by Hadley media and available on the Town website) with Dr. Anne McKenzie, Superintendent of Schools, (Wayne) Chief Mike Mason, Chief of Police (Pat) and Ed O'Connor, Director of Human Resources (Margaret). The group notes that Ed has recently resigned his position. After receiving these three written summaries, Margaret will connect with Dr. David Cort, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Associate Professor of Sociology in the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences at UMass Amherst. Margaret will provide Dr. Cort with the Survey/Study Committee outline and the summaries of the interviews with Hadley leaders. The group discussed the need for survey/study funding and the potential difficulties of securing money. The MA Cultural Council was identified as a potential source of funding.

New Business

Hadley Learns

- Humera Fasihuddin reported on the Fall 3-Part Series on indigenous people. The September program will focus on the history of our region including the documentary *The Great Falls: Discovery, Destruction and Preservation in a Massachusetts Town* with a follow-up discussion on September 20, 2021 at 7 pm with the filmmaker, Tim Timreck. Humera directed the group to hadleylearns.com to register for a link to the film and discussion. The film is an hour and 20 minutes long. There is additional information on the website about the fall series.

KW & MM meetings w/ Sharon CDEI and w/Wenham Human Rights Committee

Kayla shared that she and Margaret spoke with leaders in both Sharon and Wenham regarding their DEI efforts. Kayla shared some of the Wenham Human Rights Committee efforts to affirm diversity and address discrimination.

- Flag raising
- Land acknowledgement (requested by students)
- Language changes in town restrooms
- Human Rights calendar
- Critical Race Theory dialogue
- Portal for reporting incidents of discrimination
- Police support for intervention in bias-related incidents of harassments

Current committee membership and future needs

Those in attendance affirmed their continued commitment to serving on the CDEI

Open agenda

- The group engaged in general conversation. Wayne offered to assist Ada and Amy to support events and Ada affirmed this interest while acknowledging that the Diversity Club is just 'getting up and running'. Mark announced that the Springfield Diocese is providing support for Afghan refugees. Amy shared that Syrian archaeologist Basilius Zeno, Visiting Lecturer and Loewenstein Fellow at Amherst College and Washington Post contributor spoke at Hopkins about the Syrian refugee crisis.

Next meeting date

Kayla announced that the next meeting of the CDEI is Monday, October 4, 2021 at 5:15 pm via Zoom.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 pm.

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