

## MINUTES of the Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (CDEI) Meeting 9 21 23

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 7:00 pm

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

When: September 21, 2023 @7:00 pm

Where: Hadley Senior Center

Who: Chair Mark Dunn (MD), Joanne Goding (JG), Crystal Jackson (CJ), Clerk Pat Rissmeyer (PR) and Sarah Strong (SS)

Absent: E. Wayne Abercrombie (WA), Megan Relin (MR), C Randy Izer, (RI)\* \*Non-voting member/SB liaison

1. **Welcome and call to order** MD called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

### 2. Opening Reflection

- MD opened the floor to a member reflection.
- MD expressed gratitude for Crystal Jackson (CJ) the newest CDEI member.
- PR shared that earlier that day, she attended the inauguration of President Danielle Holley the first permanent Black president in Mount Holyoke's 186-year history. President Holley is a nationally recognized legal scholar and educator, with degrees from Yale University and Harvard Law School. The Mount Holyoke community celebrated President Holley's appointment with great enthusiasm and joy. PR reported that the ceremony included a land acknowledgement and blessing ceremony offered by Larry Spotted Crow Mann, Founder and Co-Director of the Ohketeau Cultural Center, Citizen of Hassanamisco Nipmuc Tribe.

### 3. Clerk's Report/Review of the minutes

- PR distributed for review the updated CDEI minutes of 8/17/23.
- JG moved to approve the minutes. CJ seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

### 4. Old Business

- Senior Center/CDEI Movie Matinee: 10/20 @ 12:30 pm** PR reported that the film *People of the Feather: Survival in the Canadian Arctic (2011)* has been selected. PR asked for a CDEI member to introduce the film and open the floor to remarks following the film and also for people to volunteer to make sweet bread/cookies. MD reviewed his work calendar and offered to take the lead. CJ will try to rearrange her work schedule for that day to attend.
- Development of Questions for HR Director, Troy Brin**  
MD provided background information on the HR position.  
The CDEI discussed strategies for attracting and retaining a diverse workforce in Hadley, and commitment to providing DEI training to all Town employees.  
The CDEI discussed the importance of doing background checks on candidates.  
The group agreed to review the CDEI mission and compile and send to PR a list of potential questions for Troy in advance of the next meeting.

### 5. New Business

- Stirring the Ashes*, Porter-Phelps Huntington Museum, 9/23**  
MD suggested that we advertise this program and SS offered the idea that we simply advertise on quarter sheets. PR will attend. CJ will try to attend.
- Jason Burns (JB), Head Teacher, Hopkins Academy, Indigenous Peoples Day**  
PR reported that JB has invited the CDEI to partner again with him and Hopkins Academy in the Spring on developing an academic experience for students to study indigenous people. The CDEI brainstormed a variety of ideas including partnering with faculty at UMass Amherst, considering displaying the students' work in the Hadley Mall.  
PR agreed to invite JB to our October meeting.

- c. PR announced that **Dr. Nick Holschuh will be speaking on Earth's Climate: Past, Present and Future: Lessons from Antarctica at the Library on 10/4 @ 6 pm**
- d. **Discussion of topics suggested for the future:**
  - Members discussed the CDEI commitment to building relationships across Hadley – with the schools, community groups, Town agencies, administrative offices etc.
  - MD reviewed the list of programs that the CDEI offered in partnership including the showing of films *High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America* (Juneteenth 2022) *Gather* (Indigenous Peoples Day, 2022), *Summer of Soul* (Black History Month, February 2023), and *Growing Up Trans* (LGBTQ Pride, June 2023).
  - JG shared that she is reading *Poverty by America* by Matthew Desmond. Members discussed class issues, poverty, and the need for increased affordable housing in Hadley.
  - MD reported that the Commonwealth is promoting 40R housing that targets certain areas of a community for affordable housing. MD suggested that there is great value in this 'spot housing' approach.
  - JG shared that the Springfield Republican had a front- page story on the need for affordable housing. SS reminded the group that the Valley CDC very effectively communicated that need.
  - JG shared that she attended the presentation by the Senior Center and the Council on Aging on aging and dementia friendly housing. The group affirmed the need among seniors for Affordable Housing. CJ suggested that seniors are comparatively less able to afford cost of living increases. CJ characterized Golden Court units are very small for seniors to live comfortably, although East Street condos are much larger and quite expensive and unaffordable for most seniors.
  - The group shared some of the constraints on development– requirements for lots to be a certain size, many areas zoned for residential/agricultural, constraints on systems (sewer etc.) to accommodate increased housing, builders disinterested in developing small parcels etc.
  - The CDEI suggested that UMass Amherst has inadequate housing to accommodate their students; students seek and drive up the price of the few available rentals in Hadley.
  - MD referenced the Affordable Housing Trust with representation from various Town Committees. It was suggested that the Affordable Housing Trust consider appointing a renter.

## 6. Open Agenda

- a. The CDEI would like to see strengthened communication of Town meeting date, time, location.
- b. CJ reported that she is delighted to have been appointed to the CDEI and she is committed to making every effort to be an engaged committee member. Members expressed appreciation to CJ for her interest and commitment and warmly welcomed her.
- c. **The next meeting will be on 10/19/23 at 7 pm in the Senior Center.**

## 7. Adjournment

- a. MD thanked everyone for their participation and CJ made a motion for adjournment; SS seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm by a vote of 5-0.