

MINUTES of the Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (CDEI) Meeting 10/19/23

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: October 19, 2023 @ 7:00 pm

Where: Hadley Senior Center

Who: Acting Chair E. Wayne Abercrombie (WA), Joanne Goding (JG), Crystal Jackson (CJ), Clerk Pat Rissmeyer (PR) and Sarah Strong (SS)

Absent: Mark Dunn (MD), Megan Relin (MR), C Randy Izer, (RI)* *Non-voting member/SB liaison

1. **Welcome and call to order** WA called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. **Opening Reflection**
 - WA opened the floor to member reflection.
3. **Clerk's Report/Review of the minutes**
 - PR distributed for review the updated CDEI minutes of 9/21/23. JG proposed acceptance of the minutes with four edits. With these edits, the minutes were approved 5-0.
4. **Old Business**
 - a. **Senior Center Movie Matinee: 10/20 @ 12:30 pm.** The CDEI will be co-sponsoring the film *People of the Feather: Survival in the Canadian Arctic (2011)* at the **Senior Center Movie Matinee** SS will attend the event and bring refreshments.
 - b. **Development of Questions for HR Director, Troy Brin**
 - The CDEI discussed inviting Troy to our 1/18/24 meeting. In advance, Troy requested we provide him with questions. The CDEI discussed some potential questions.
 - SS shared that we interviewed the prior Town HR Director on 5/24/21 and that interview is available on the CDEI page on the Hadley website. SS recalls that the prior HR Director indicated that he was committed to:
 - ✓ Ensuring that all Town job descriptions include gender-neutral language
 - ✓ Providing DEI training for all employees
 - In addition to asking if Troy supports the initiatives listed above, the CDEI would like to explore the following questions:
 - ✓ What strategies do you have in place to recruit and retain a diverse workforce?
 - ✓ How can the CDEI support you in your work? What would a partnership entail?
 - The group agreed to compile and send to PR a list of potential questions for Troy in advance of the next meeting.
 - c. **Update Jason Burns, Hopkins Teacher, CDEI collaboration on Indigenous People Project**
 - PR reported that John Burns informed her that Hopkins decided to expand the educational project (beyond Indigenous People) and focus more broadly on racial and cultural diversity.
 - WA responded to questions regarding our prior involvement, explaining that the CDEI acted as 'hosts' supporting the set-up of the library to accommodate the student posters and speakers, and providing refreshments for students, teachers, and guests.
 - WA expressed enthusiastic support for a collaboration between the CDEI and Hopkins.
 - PR echoed WA's support. PR will request the program dates and ask how we can help.
 - d. **Establishment of annual CDEI celebratory/educational events**

The group engaged in a lengthy 'brainstorming' discussion on how we can celebrate DEI events.

- WA asked if we know potential speakers and presenters. CJ will speak with a colleague.
- JG suggested we identify, amplify, and advertise programs others are offering. JG gave an example of a program she attended that was repeated on Zoom.
- JG supports continuation of our Senior Center Movie Matinee collaboration.
- WA affirmed a collaborative approach and co-sponsorship strategy consistent with our mission.
- WA suggested we make this topic a permanent part of our agenda.

5. New Business

a. Discussion of two recent programs in Hadley

- WA asked those who attended to share their thoughts on these programs:

Stirring the Ashes, Porter-Phelps Huntington Museum (PPHM), 9/23

[Stirring the Ashes: 9-23-23 - YouTube](#)

- CJ shared that it touched her heart to hear presenters speaking in the voice of the enslaved person.
- CJ was struck by the strength and fortitude of the individuals despite the struggle.
- CJ felt the spirit of and an emotional connection to the place especially on the cold/rainy day.
- PR affirmed that she too was deeply moved by the experience and informed the group that Alex LaMarche, Director of Hadley Media videotaped the program.
- The CDEI members expressed interest in viewing the video and perhaps sponsoring a showing of it.
- CJ offered to connect with the Director of the PPHM to inquire about promoting a special event.

Dr. Nick Holschuh, *Earth's Climate: Past, Present and Future: Lessons from Antarctica Library*, 10/4 @ 6 pm

- SS reported that she attended the lecture and found Dr. Holschuh's presentation interesting and clear (noting his state-of-the-art slides) explaining the electromagnetic spectrum and how we know what we know. PR concurred with SS's comments - Dr. Holschuh was an outstanding presenter.
- JG noted that the program was sponsored by the Friends of the Library and that we consider partnering with them in the future.
- WA invited us to make a list of things we want to support and to inform each other of events we enjoyed and may want to sponsor. We could add this item to our agenda.

6. Open Agenda

- The group discussed changing the December CDEI meeting from 12/21 to 12/14 to avoid holiday conflicts. We will discuss the proposed change at our November meeting,
- JG shared that the 10/19/23 *Daily Hampshire Gazette* features an article describing Governor Maura Healey's proposed bill to make housing more affordable in MA.

7. Closing Reflection

- JG referenced *Poverty By America* in which author Matthew Desmond argues that we are segregated by design.
- CJ shared that she has recognized this intentional segregation her whole life.
- WA shared that he was born in 1938 in the south (during Reconstruction) and his godmother shared the truth with WA about racial segregation.
- CJ suggested that segregation is a huge bolder that everyone has to chip away at it. There are many ways to think about this but overall, it needs to be recognized and brought forward.
- WA emphasized the importance of building relationships across race and color – to dialogue, to live near each other. CJ shared that she cooked food for the Juneteenth Celebration at the “Hadley World's Fair” and how events like these bring people together.
- WA and CJ agreed that it is important to bring people together as humans and not to give up.
- WA has hope because of youth.

8. Adjournment

WA thanked everyone for their participation and SS made a motion for adjournment; CJ seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm by a vote of 5-0.