

MINUTES of the Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (CDEI) 1/19/23 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 7:00 pm

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

When: January 19, 2023 @7:00 pm

Where: Hadley Senior Center

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

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

1. Welcome and call to order

MD called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. MD announced that the Select Board appointed Megan Relin (MR) to the CDEI. JG shared this appointment was in the Hampshire Gazette.

2. Clerk's Report

PR distributed for review the CDEI minutes of December 8, 2022. JG identified a typo in in Old Business, paragraph 3, line 5 and proposing editing “well regard” to “well-regarded”. JG moved to approve the minutes with the edit. SS seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

3. Old Business

a. Continued discussion on Local Preference, Affordable Housing Project, EconoLodge/Hadley located at 329 Russell Street

The group engaged in a follow-up discussion on Local Preference, the opportunity for municipalities to request ‘lottery prioritization’ for those with local community ties (residency, employment, children in school). This request is made during zoning approval for Chapter 40B affordable housing developments. Municipalities can request up to 70 % Local Preference.

The group reviewed the details of the proposed project, provided on the 10/25/22 Valley CDC PowerPoint presentation provided by Laura Baker, Real Estate Development Director.

The PowerPoint lists the Income Caps (% of Area Median Income):

	<u>1 People</u>	<u>2 People</u>
30%	\$19,800/year	\$22,600/year
60%	\$39,549/year	\$45,180/year

30% = suitable for retirees, part-time workers, and persons with disabilities

60% = suitable for full-time low wage workers

The PowerPoint describes the specifics of the units:

- One unit will be for a Resident Manager. Fifty units will be for tenants.
 - 39 will be studio apartments – typical size is 257 square feet.
 - 12 will be one-bedroom apartments – typical size is 514 square feet.

CDEI members observed that given the square footage of these units they seem best suited to an individual or a couple but not a family.

The CDEI affirmed their support of the EconoLodge project & engaged in discussion about how to consider Local Preference within the context of issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Given that our Committee is charged with promoting equity, we see it as our responsibility to consider Local Preference from the DEI vantage point.

- Although it may be natural to advocate “Local” given national awareness (and our personal commitments) to supporting local businesses and our neighbors, the group agreed this project requires a different analysis.
- CDEI members acknowledged that knowledge of longstanding housing inequality factors into their perspective on Local Preference.
- The group considered how giving lottery preference to those with ties to Hadley, who already have the benefit of living in a good Town, with good schools and plentiful entry-level employment, may set up further inequity.
- Authorizing ‘preference’ to some, systematically denies the opportunity to others. In real numbers, a 70% Local Preference would reduce fifty units to fifteen.

The conversation led to the equality versus equity cartoon that the CDEI discussed several years ago. The updated cartoon depicts three people (short in stature, medium in stature and tall in stature) attempting to watch a baseball game on the other side of a solid wood fence.

<https://www.diffen.com/difference/Equality-vs-Equity>

- In the first image, each person is given a small box to stand on to be able to view the game. They are being treated **equally**. In this frame, the tallest person towers over the others and the shortest person still cannot see over the fence.
- In the second image, the boxes are rearranged so the medium in stature individual is given one box, the shortest in stature is given two boxes and the taller in stature individual has no box. In this frame, they are being treated **equitably**. In this frame, all three people can view the game.
- In the third image, the wooden fence is replaced by a chain fence. All three can see the game without any accommodation because the cause of the inequity has been removed. *Courtesy Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities by City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), Ottawa*

The consensus among those in attendance is that a low-no Local Preference is most equitable from a DEI perspective.

- The group brainstormed how best to further reflect, gather our thoughts, and draft a coherent CDEI letter for the Zoning Board. We decided to each write a succinct (paragraph or two) statement by February 9, 2023, and submit to PR. This letter would specify a recommended Local Preference percentage. PR will compile those paragraphs.
- Further, MD offered to identify the date that Zoning Board will convene to discuss the proposed project. Prior to that meeting, the CDEI intends to present a letter.

Discussion of the Town Code of Conduct

MD asked for feedback on the Town Code of Conduct, approved by the Select Board and shared with the CDEI by the Town Administrator at our November 17, 2022.

- JG identified a formatting issue in section V Enforcement bullet two.
- JG stated that she has been unable to find the Anti-Harassment and Anti-discrimination policies referenced in the Code of Conduct.
- PR was unable to find the Code of Conduct on the Town website.

In summary, the CDEI wishes to express appreciation to the Town Administrator, affirm the Code of Conduct and request that the Code of Conduct, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination policies be posted on the Town website where appropriate. As chair, MD will share this feedback with the Town Administrator.

4. New Business

a. Overview of the work of local DEI committees – MR

MD tabled this item until February.

5. Open Agenda

PR reminded the group that the CDEI is co-sponsoring the Movie Matinee showing of *Summer of Soul* directed by Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson (2021, 1 hour 58 minutes) at the Senior Center on February 10, 2023 @ 12:15. The film chronicles the 1969 six-week Harlem Cultural Festival in Mount Morris Park (now Marcus Garvey Park). The documentary includes festival performances by Sly & the Family Stone, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Mahalia Jackson, Steve Wonder, Nina Simone, B.B. King, and the 5th Dimension. PR reminded the group that the CDEI will be contributing refreshments and that MD had offered to bake brownies for the event. PR invited other contributions and offered to make something non-chocolate.

MD announced that the CDEI has time to submit their annual report. PR offered to write a draft to be reviewed at the February meeting. SS offered to assist. MD announced that the Select Board will review MR request for appointment to the CDEI on 12/21/22.

WA expressed his disappointment that the Select Board neglected to openly address the ‘crime crap’ comment of one of its members. JG suggested that the development of the Code of Conduct was the Town’s response. MD suggested the individual in question has invested quite a bit to the Town.

6. Next Meeting

MD announced that the next meeting will be February 16, at 7 pm in the Senior Center. MD thanked everyone for their participation and SS made a motion for adjournment and JG seconded the motion.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm by a vote of 4-0.

Minutes submitted by Pat Rissmeyer, Clerk, CDEI