

## MINUTES of the Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (CDEI) 11/17/22 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 7:00 pm

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

When: November 17, 7:00 pm

Where: Hadley Senior Center

Who: Chair Mark Dunn (MD), E. Wayne Abercrombie (WA), Joanne Goding (JG), Clerk Pat Rissmeyer (PR), Sarah Strong (SS), Megan Relin, (MR) and Carolyn Brennan (CB), Hadley Town Administrator (via Zoom)

Absent: Randy Izer, (RI)\*, Non-voting member/SB liaison

### 1. Welcome and call to order

MD called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. MD proposed we reorder the agenda to accommodate Town Administrator Carolyn Brennan (CB). Motion was made by SS, seconded by JG and motion passed 5-0

### 3. Old business

#### a. Follow-up to CDEI response to Select Board Member comments – MD

MD provided background on the CDEI request for the Town of Hadley to develop a code of conduct. He referenced the Select Board member's Facebook post in May 2021 characterizing affordable housing as bringing more 'crime crap' to Hadley. He shared that he preferred not to attack but to seek clarification of the comment, and ultimately to develop a code of conduct to educate and hold accountable Town officials.

MD turned over the meeting to Town Administrator Carolyn Brennan (CB) via Zoom who thanked the CDEI for their professional and thoughtful approach to addressing the concern. CB acknowledged that the CDEI was a catalyst for the Town to follow through on a proposal that had been under consideration for some time. CB shared that the Town consulted with their insurance company and created a code of conduct using a template. The Select Board reviewed the proposed Code of Conduct, voted, and adopted it on the previous evening. Although the Select Board has approved the Code of Conduct, CB invited the CDEI to review it and provide feedback. JG asked CB if there has been a conversation with the Select Board Member about her comment and if she intends to speak with us. CB shared that she has spoken with her, and that the Select Board Member indicated that she was not going to respond.

MD expressed appreciation to CB for her leadership; he asked the CDEI to review the Code of Conduct for discussion at our December meeting and affirmed the CDEI commitment to working in collaboration with Town leaders. CB thanked the CDEI and left the meeting via Zoom.

### 2. Clerk's Report

PR distributed for review the CDEI minutes of October 25, 2022. JG moved to approve. SS seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

MD welcomed potential new member Megan Relin to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves. The group engaged in a thoughtful conversation about their personal commitments to DEI issues and enthusiastically encouraged MR to join us as her expertise and experiences would be tremendous assets.

### 3. Old Business (continued)

#### b. Discussion of Local Preference, Affordable Housing Project, Hadley

The group engaged in a follow-up discussion to our prior meeting about how municipalities can request Local Preference from the State during zoning approval for Chapter 40B affordable housing development. SS summarized that local preference allows communities to designate up to 70% of units to those with local ties (residency, employment, children in schools). SS reminded the group that choosing local preference can diminish the opportunity to increase the racial diversity that affordable housing affords unrepresented people and therefore the issue of Local Preference is particularly relevant to the CDEI.

MD highlighted the importance of the Route 9 commercial corridor to the Town of Hadley. He noted that the Econo Lodge, the site for the proposed affordable housing development, is located within this corridor. MD distinguished between a friendly 40B (when a municipality meets the 10% threshold then developers must comply with all municipal zoning) and a hostile 40B (when a town is below the 10% threshold then the town is vulnerable to a 40B developer locating their project wherever they want despite existing zoning restrictions). MD informed the group that Hadley currently exceeds the required 10% percentage of affordable housing units and therefore Hadley is not vulnerable to a hostile 40B project.

The group discussed the need for affordable housing among lower wage earners employed in Hadley. JG suggested that staff working in the retail stores on Route 9 often travel from Springfield, Chicopee and other more affordable Hampden County communities. This workforce includes people of color. WA suggested that we devote our December meeting to the topic of Local Preference, and we invite Alexis Breiteneicher, Executive Director and Laura Baker, Real Estate Development Director of the Valley CDC to join us. MD agreed. JG expressed an interest in additional data. MD suggested that the CDEI members want to educate themselves on these issues and be in a position to educate others on the issues. Given some scheduling challenges, the group decided to hold the next CDEI meeting on Thursday, December 8, 2022, at 7 pm. MD will draft an invitation to Valley CDC.

#### 4. New Business

PR shared that Violet Suska, Program Coordinator, Hadley Council on Aging invited us to partner on the February 10, 2023, Movie Matinee in the Senior Center. Violet is proposing to show *The Summer of Soul*, a film that highlights the Harlem Cultural Festival, a celebration of Black music, culture, and history, held over six weeks in 1969 in Mount Morris Park (now Marcus Garvey Park). PR expressed appreciation for Violet's interest and initiative. Several CDEI members have seen the film and enthusiastically supported the selection and co-sponsorship of the event. JG shared that she wished the event were closer to the King holiday as the CDEI had wanted to honor that occasion. PR agreed but suggested that given the limited bandwidth of our group we may not be able to deliver a program in mid-January. PR shared that Violet asked the CDEI to contribute refreshments. MD volunteered to make brownies. PR will be the CDEI point person for the event.

#### 5. Open Agenda

The group suggested we identify and highlight local events around the King holiday. In addition, the group asked MR to share information at our January meeting about the DEI-related groups in Western MA, particularly in Deerfield, Sunderland, and Hatfield. WA made a formal motion that MR become a CDEI member; MD informed MR the Town of Hadley follows a process to appoint new members to Town Committees and MR would need to apply. MR confirmed the meeting day/time and indicated that she would be interested in joining.

#### 6. Next Meeting

MD announced that the next meeting will be December 8, at 7 pm in the Senior Center. MD thanked everyone for their participation and JG made a motion for adjournment and SS seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm by a vote of 5-0.

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