



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee Meeting
Selectmen's Meeting Room
Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5398

Monday, February 13, 2023 at 6:45 PM

Minutes

Present: Ms. Cinthia Mesquita, Ms. Bindu Gupta Mr. George Hanna, Mr. Pankaj Adaval, Mx. Freddi Koss, Ms. Holly Millershank, and Ms. Adeola Mbaneme

Also Present: Ms. Beth N. Casavant, Select Board Vice Chair and Ms. Taylor M. Galusha, Principal Department Assistant - Office of the Select Board and Town Manager

1. Call to Order

- Ms. Casavant called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM
- Ms. Mbaneme arrived at 6:53 PM

2. Introductions

Ms. Mesquita introduced herself to the other members as she was not present at the first meeting as well as Ms. Mbaneme.

3. Review and act to elect committee officers (*item taken last during the meeting*)

Ms. Casavant summarized the responsibilities of each of the committee officers generally.

- Chair** - On a motion by Mr. Adaval, seconded by Ms. Millershank, the committee unanimously voted to appoint Ms. Mesquita as Chair of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee.
- Vice Chair** - On a motion by Ms. Millershank, seconded by Mx. Koss, the committee unanimously voted to appoint Ms. Bindu as Vice Chair of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee.
- Clerk** - On a motion by Mr. Adaval, seconded by Mx. Koss, the committee unanimously voted to appoint Mr. Hanna as Clerk of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee.

4. Meeting with VISIONS Inc for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Training

- Mr. John Colon and Ms. Wendy Helmpcamp gave a presentation to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee on the same tools and strategies that the Select Board received earlier this year. The training can be found attached in the referenced materials.

5. Review Correspondence

- Email, dated January 26, 2023, from Debroah Lebeaux, Board of Library Trustees, re: Land Acknowledgement statement**

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee

February 13, 2023

Page 2 of 2

- i. The Members discussed the best way to proceed with the request and it was agreed that Ms. Lebeaux and the Library Director/or another representative from the Board of Library Trustees would attend the next meeting on March 13, 2023 to discuss the statement further.

6. Adjourn

On a motion by Ms. Millershank, seconded by Mx. Koss, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Taylor M. Galusha

Referenced Materials:
- VISIONS Presentation



Taking Diversity and Inclusion to the Next Level

**Town of Shrewsbury
DEIB Committee:
Building a Bridge to Common Ground
with the Select Board**

February 13, 2023

Facilitators:

John E. Colón, MA and Wendy Brown Helmkamp, MBA

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VISIONS, Inc. is a pioneering non-profit organizational development, training and consulting organization that initiates a positive learning journey for people and groups to become catalysts for excellence and change.

VISIONS provides a broad range of services with a diversity and inclusion perspective. Since our founding in 1984, VISIONS has worked with over 500 organizations in the United States and internationally.

Getting Present

Name yourself

What are you feeling as we begin our work today?

Call on the next person

Objectives of Our Session

Introduction of two VISIONS DEI Essential tools to:

1. Use in your ongoing work as the DEIB Committee; and
2. Build a bridge to common ground between the DEIB Committee and Select Board

Guidelines For Effective Cross-Cultural Dialogue

- ◆ “Try on”
- ◆ It’s okay to disagree
- ◆ It is not okay to blame, shame, or attack, self or others
- ◆ Practice “self-focus”
- ◆ Practice “both/and” thinking
- ◆ Notice both process and content
- ◆ Be aware of intent and impact
- ◆ Confidentiality



Try On

An invitation to be open-minded to others' ideas, feelings, worldviews, and ways of doing things so that greater exploration and understanding is possible.



It's Okay to Disagree

Assumes that disagreement is not only inevitable, but it can help individuals and groups produce better outcomes. What new possibilities emerge when we disagree? This guideline assumes we can disagree and still stay connected.



It's Not Okay to Blame, Shame or Attack Self or Others

Assumes that most of us have learned to show our disagreement by making the other person wrong. When we attack, blame or shame ourselves or others, we are less likely to take in, problem solve, and learn from our differences.



Practice Self Focus

Learning about differences can be accelerated when we listen to, honor, and learn from our internal thoughts, feelings, and reactions.

“I, me, and my”



Practice both/and thinking

This invites us to see that more than one reality or perspective can be true at the same time (diunital cognition), rather than seeing reality as strictly either/or, right/wrong (binary thinking).



Notice both Process and Content

Content is the “what”
“Who, where, when, why, and how” are all
about **process**

Notice who is engaged and who is not;
notice who is comfortable and who is not,
including ourselves.

Make Space/Take Space



Be aware of both Intent and Impact

In cross cultural situations, our intent might not match our impact. When we have a negative impact on others across culture, ensuring a successful outcome requires addressing that negative impact.



Confidentiality

We commit to honoring others' sharing and not repeat personal details outside of this session today.

Confidentiality helps foster brave spaces where we can show up authentically, hold ourselves accountable, and learn.

The Guidelines are Skills

- ◆ “Try on”
- ◆ It’s okay to disagree
- ◆ It is not okay to blame, shame, or attack, self or others
- ◆ Practice “self-focus”
- ◆ Practice “both/and” thinking
- ◆ Notice both process and content
- ◆ Be aware of intent and impact
- ◆ Confidentiality

Questions for Reflection

1. Which Guideline do you practice well?
2. Which is a challenge for you?
3. Is there one you want to “try on” as you begin your work as the DEIB Committee?

Multicultural Process of Change

At all levels

Monoculturalism

Rejection of differences and a belief in the superiority of the dominant group at the following levels:

- Personal
- Interpersonal
- Institutional/Structural
- Cultural

Oppression
“Melting Pot”
Scarcity
Assimilation
Exclusion

Equity and Inclusion

Sustained commitment to transforming relationships, systems, and outcomes while valuing and honoring differences at the following levels:

- Personal
- Interpersonal
- Institutional/Structural
- Cultural

Liberation
“Salad Bowl/Fruit Salad”
Abundance
Pluralism

Recognize, understand, appreciate differences

Address impact of and transform power differentials

Co-create fair and just access to resources

Develop a Liberatory Consciousness

Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Closure

- ◆ **Appreciations**
- ◆ **Regrets**
- ◆ **Learnings, Re-learnings,
Un-learnings**

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