

Groton Diversity Task Force

August 27, 2020

Present: Ni-Ama Akuete, Josh Degen, Deb Dowson, Rafael Glod, Tim Manugian, Raquel Majeski, James Moore, Paul Shay, Audra Waiters.

Also present: Mark Haddad, Nadia Madden, Groton Channel

Meeting was called to order at 7pm.

A. Organize the Task Force

Elect Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk - Determine who will take the minutes

Chair: Raquel Majeski

Vice-Chair: Audra Waiters

Clerk: Nadia Madden

Moved, seconded and approved by all present.

B. Review Open Meeting Law Compliance

Haddad: Review of Open Meeting Law. Need to be careful dealing with email and social media.

Degen: Best to use social media to solicit input from community

C. Review Charge of the Task Force - Develop Strategy to carry out

Chair read out the charge:

DTF Committee Charge: Study the causes of systemic racism and stereotypes attached to race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and culture. Meet with local and state stakeholder groups to identify areas that need to be evaluated to determine if they are still appropriate in today's culture. Provide observations and give recommendations to the Select Board. The committee will suggest ideas to help to educate the citizens of Groton and make it a more welcoming community.

Term: The DTF will meet weekly for a six-month term beginning in August 2020 and continue through the end of January 2021. An interim report along with an Executive Summary will be delivered no later than February 15, 2021 to both the Select Board and the GDRSD. Should the Select Board choose to continue the committee they may do so via voice vote.

Dowson: suggested adding gender and ability to the charge. Asked for further clarification on the meaning of "culture"? The board thought could be something like being Puerto Rican (not a race or ethnicity) or being xenophobic towards people from different cultures.

Determined: All committee members will review the charge and bring suggested changes for discussion at our next meeting.

Additional issues that the GTDF might want to take up:

Moore: Political symbols such as the blue ribbon on the tree outside the Police Station could be seen as political, and also unwelcoming.

Manugian: Groton Town Seal with the Bible on it

Degen: Groton is a Sundown Town (laws are still on the books). Could be removed at next town meeting vote.

Motion: *The Groton Diversity Task Force recommends to the Select Board that the October 3rd town meeting warrant includes an article to rescind the status of Groton as a sundown town should that vote have not already occurred.*

**Moved: Degen Seconded: Moore, Akuete
Voted unanimously in favor.**

Determined: The DTF members will go back to our communities and come up with a set of issues that the committee wants to address during the 6-month term. All members will email Raquel with identified community issues by Monday, August 31.

D. Set Regular Meeting Schedule

Determined: GDTF will meet every other Thursday, starting Sept 2nd. Additional time may be set aside for the meeting of subcommittees.

Discussion of a public comment process. Degen will be running the video, will inform Chair if any participants want to comment.

Agenda will be set and posted by the end of the day on Monday, August 31st. All committee members to send potential agenda items to rmajeski@lacademy.edu.

Any committee members who want a Town of Groton email need to ask Mark Haddad. Degen noted that board members cannot delete emails that are a part of Town of Groton town business.

E Other Business

The Committee did a round robin of introductions where members introduced themselves and their backgrounds.

Meeting Adjourned