

Groton Diversity Task Force

September 24, 2020

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

Also present: Groton Channel

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Introductions

A. Task Force Community Norms:

- Listening to understand
- Cameras on for all task force members
- Agenda for each meeting
- Spend meetings on focused topics and bringing in specific stakeholders
- Bringing in different perspectives when important
- Being civil and respectful
- Possibility of meeting in person vs on Zoom (to discuss with Mark)
- Using “I” Statements for our experiences, not assuming we can speak for the communities we represent without further input.
- Noting “oops” and “ouch” statements in real time, and acknowledging good intent on all sides.
- More transparency from the Select Board on what the town is looking for, confirmation that we have a blank slate.

B. Discuss and Review Potential Changes to the Charge of the Committee

Chair read out the suggested amendments to the DTF Committee charge to recommend for modification by the Select Board:

DTF Committee Charge: Study the causes of systemic racism and stereotypes attached to age, ability, gender, socioeconomic status, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, and other marginalized communities. 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.

Discussion on wording of the charge and meeting frequency. Motion tabled for grammatical review

C. Consider Establishing Various Working Groups

Suggested work groups and members:

- **Housing (Tim, Raquel, Ni-Ama)**
 - Examine: Friendly 40B Policy (Public)
 - Explore investment in, fair access to, and policy encouraging affordable housing for both homeowners and renters
 - Critically engage with Groton's lack of diversity and identify factors that contribute to this.
 - Provide observations and give recommendations to the Select Board.
- **Blue Laws (Josh, Audra)**
 - Research any active local Blue Laws
- **Town Image and Policy (Michelle, Paul, Nadia, Deb)**
 - Ensuring our town's policies, iconography, and priorities line up with the values of inclusion and diversity
 - Ensure that town symbols, mascots, signs, names, etc. are not offensive or exclusive and that they reflect the town's goal of being a welcoming place for all. (Ex. Town Seal, School Mascot, Redskin Trail)
 - Review policies to ensure our police force's current high standard is codified.
 - Working to balance the historical portrait of Native American involvement in the history of Groton
- **Education/Training (James, Rafael)**
 - Ensure ongoing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training is provided for Town Employees, Teachers, and Students
 - Provide community education on issues of diversity and inclusion through lectures, events, and activities
 - Effectively communicate the findings of the board not only to the Select Board, but to the Community as well
 - Gather and review data on relevant diversity topics: Publish an annual report
 - Provide framework and recommendations to the Select Board

Next steps: Raquel will talk to Mark Haddad about the format for the working groups under Open Meeting Law.

D. Review and Discuss Various Town Policies

Discussion of warrant article 1 for Groton Town Meeting: decided to take an additional vote including Michelle Collette.

M/S/V unanimously to approve Warrant Article 1 for Town Meeting

Committee member Degen brought forward the document: “Is Groton a Sundown Town? Was it ever a Sundown Town?” for discussion and approval by the task force as a handout for Town Meeting.

Committee member Collette noted concerns about putting forward a warrant article so quickly.

M/S/V unanimously to approve the document.

Josh Degen will introduce the warrant article, and James Moore will speak on behalf of the task force.

E. Approve Minutes from August 27, 2020, and September 3, 2020.

Approved as amended (date is 2020, not 2000, school system is GDRSD, and town council should be spelled counsel)

M/S/V to approve the amended minutes from 8.27.2020 and 9.3.2020. Michelle Collette abstained, all other members in favor.

Next meeting will be announced ASAP

Document: Policies document to be included in minutes.

Document: “Is Groton a Sundown Town” to be included in minutes

Meeting Adjourned @8:23 pm