

Groton Diversity Task Force

October 29, 2020

Present: Nii-Ama Akuete, Michelle Collette, Josh Degen, Deb Dowson, Rafael Glod, Nadia Madden (arrived 7:03), Tim Manugian, Raquel Majeski, James Moore, Paul Shay.

Also present: Groton Channel

Not Present: Audra Waiters.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Task Force Reports

Town Image Working Group (James, Michelle, and Paul)

- Blue ribbons on town property by police station. Replace the sign with: “We support the Groton Police dept and say that all are welcome”
- Policy: for Groton to become a welcoming community. Groton adopt policies and procedures consistent with the following: (get from James re:immigration status).
- Concerns raised about getting this policy completed.
- Elements of town that make it unwelcoming
 - School Mascot
 - Modifications to Town Seal
 - Redskin Train: changing the name. Concerns about the time and costs of doing the work. Michelle Collette noted that roads in Groton have been renamed for public safety needs by the town before, and that people did it. Nadia Madden asked if the committee should consider tackling the signs about King Philip’s War in the center of town.
 - Suggestion: changes to Groton Country Club to something less exclusive like the Groton Recreational Center. Josh Degen noted that the club has had an alternate name before, and it didn’t go well.
 - Disabilities: lack of universal accessibility, including well-placed accessible parking on Main St and improvements to sidewalks to improve curb cuts.
 - That the town make a more concerted effort to enlist young adults in aiding the senior community.
 - Stakeholders: Chief of police, School Committee, Select Board, Commission for accessibility, Groton CC manager, Groton Neighbors, Groton Neighborhood Food project, and the Groton Trust Fund.

Training Group (Deb Dowson, Raquel Majeski, Nadia Madden)

- SEED Training
- Civil Rights training program

- Suggestion: town-wide trainings, as well as small groups for specific departments in the town.
- Stakeholders: Human Resources Coordinator, would be helpful to invite all heads of departments to find out what leadership thinks they need for DEI training.
- James Moore asked if changes in hiring policies had been considered. Michelle noted that trainings processes are subjected to collective bargaining as the town employees are unionized.
- Chair Majeski noted that she has been able to secure Chief Luth for next week for a stakeholder discussion.

Housing group (Nii-Ama Akuete, Tim Manugian, and Audra Waiters)

- Nii-Ama Akuete presented information on housing which is currently 6% of Groton housing stock. Groton's stated goal is 10% (40B policy, statewide minimum). Avg home sizes, acreage minimums, increasing taxes, urban out-migration post-COVID, have all raised demand and housing prices.
- Will consolidate recommendations for a future meeting. Some suggestions:
 - Consider upping the % goal for affordable housing.
 - Improving walkability and accessibility
 - Policies to make more affordable housing in Groton.
 - Josh Degen recommended the need for and value of 55+ development.
 - Stakeholders: Fran Stanley, Becky Pine. The housing group may need more time to research + consolidate before bringing it before stakeholders.

Community Education Group: delayed until next meeting

Chair Majeski noted that the subgroups have made great progress so far and suggested that we keep moving the work forwards by forming the following 2 sub-working groups:

- Recruiting and Promoting: Josh Raquel, James, Deb.
- Welcoming community policies: Michelle, Nadia

Next meeting: Nov 12th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11pm