

***Groton Diversity Task Force**

Approved

April 29, 2021

Present: Nii-Ama Akuete, Michelle Collette, Amy Degen. Josh Degen, Deb Dowson, Raquel Majeski, Tim Manugian, Deirdre Slavin-Mitchell, James Moore

Absent: Audra Waiters

Also present: Groton Channel

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

Raquel announced that Audra Waiters, Vice-Chair will have to step down, and she would like to discuss this at our next meeting.

Michelle made a motion to approve minutes of April 22, 2021. Seconded by James. Minutes approved by roll call vote.

Affordable Housing (Nii-Ama, Deirdre, Audra)

Raquel announced that Josh will be making a motion at town meeting to amend Article 14, and wondered how we should proceed. Michelle suggested that we take two votes, one on the letter that supports current article, and one on Josh's amendment to the article, and Raquel agreed.

Michelle made a motion that the DTF send a letter of support to the Affordable Housing Trust which recommends that Town Meeting vote to approve Article 14, CPC Proposal D, Site Assessment Study, in the amount of \$75,000, for the Affordable Housing Trust to explore possible locations for the development of affordable housing. Seconded by Deirdre.

The full letter was shared by Raquel for the DTF to discuss, and if approved, Michelle would submit the letter to the Town Moderator to be shared at Town Meeting. Josh noted that this article is not the same as the one we voted to support in January which had named Surrenden Farms as a location to explore. Deirdre thought Josh's amendment would block progress on affordable housing that the DTF should support. Michelle reported from the January minutes, that speaking to the DTF, Fran Stanley had said their request was not limited to Surrenden Farms. Michelle believes it is the DTF's purpose to support affordable and fair housing. There was some discussion about what it would mean to support both the article and Josh's amendment. Deirdre wondered about having a Select Board member on the committee and was assured that it is a common occurrence and in keeping with our charge.

The motion passed with all in favor. Josh Degen abstained.

Raquel shared the amendment that Josh is asking the DTF to support: “that contingent to receiving funding from the CPC that the Affordable Housing Trust not expend any of these funds for any purpose until after the Diversity Task Force holds it’s Affordable Housing Summit and issues an executive summary to the Groton Select Board no later than September 15, 2021.”

Nii-Ama shared that the housing group is now planning two events to happen soon and close together, one would be open to the community to educate and hear from community members, and another one for stakeholders to reflect on the community event and make decisions and create action items and deliverables. Josh asked where and when. Nii-Ama said a date is being sought in mid to late June. Amy suggested a connection between fast tracking the events and Josh’s amendment. Josh would like to see an executive summary report come out of the meetings. Tim stated his support for Josh’s amendment before he left the meeting. James is concerned that renters wouldn’t be included in the housing summit. Nii-Ama said that having 2 events allows for everyone to be included and Deirdre said they have discussed renters’ rights quite a lot, and Michelle agreed that it was important to include renters’ rights.

Josh made a motion that the DTF support his amendment, and Amy seconded.

Nii-Ama asked who would be responsible for writing the executive report. Josh thought the DTF in conjunction with AHT; someone should be responsible for taking notes and discussion points. Amy said there was precedent in other groups had been asked for a report before receiving funding, and Josh said it was a way to increase accountability. Deb asked for clarification that the amendment wouldn’t prevent the funds from being granted. Josh said it wouldn’t.

Motion passed 5 to 4. Nii-Ama, Gordon, Amy, Josh and James in favor, Michelle, Deb, Raquel, and Deirdre opposed.

Josh asked the DTF to amend the letter of support. Michelle asked that both motions stand; the unanimous support for the letter and the 5 to 4 in favor of the amendment as they are separate, actions. Michelle doesn’t think there should be strings attached to our support, there are rules, regulations, and oversight already in place and it is not necessary to add another level. Nii-Ama agreed. Josh withdrew his request.

Community Outreach (Amy, Josh, Raquel)

Will meet next week.

Town Image Group (James, Michelle, Deirdre, Tim)

DTF was sent drafts of the letters they wrote and we will discuss next week.

Raquel asked us to review Chapters 1 & 2 of the Racial Healing Handbook for next week.

Deirdre suggested inviting an Asian American to join the DTF. Raquel said representation is important, but can be exhausting for those who are asked. A balanced committee is the hope.

There was some discussion of the logistics for Town Meeting on Saturday.

Adjourned: 7:58

Next Meeting: May 6, 7pm. on Zoom.

DD 5/3/2021