

***Groton Diversity Task Force**

May 6, 2021

Present: Nii-Ama Akuete, Gordon Candow, Michelle Collette, Josh Degen, Deb Dowson, Raquel Majeski, Tim Manugian, James Moore.

Absent: Amy Degen, Deirdre Slavin-Mitchell, Audra Waiters.

Also present: Groton Channel

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Membership: Audra will submit an official resignation letter and Lorena Novak is interested in filling out a community interest form. Josh suggested inviting her for an interview so we could then make a recommendation to have her join the task force.

Town Meeting: Raquel apologized for her oversight in neglecting to mention the DTF vote on Josh's amendment when she read the letter in support of the article.

Minutes: James made a motion to approve the minutes of April 29, 2021. Seconded by Nii-Ama. Minutes approved by roll call vote.

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

Town Seal Letter:

James read the draft letter on the topic of the town seal and Josh suggested that we mention how the religious faith of the community has changed over time, and striking the words, but leaving the book still leaves an impression of faith. Nii-Ama concurred, saying that it would offer a broader suggestion of faith. Gordon also thought it was smart to suggest a small change to the overall design, and introduce it gradually over time. Tim suggested adding "This ensures that the book on the Seal can represent the diverse faiths of all of Groton's residents, while maintaining its historic character." Josh suggested adding the wording "to lessen the significance of the upfront costs" to the paragraph about phasing in the costs gradually over time. Raquel reminded the task force that in then past we had talked about having a forum or public discussion about the town seal. The Town image group will incorporate the suggested changes, including making Select Board two words and replacing the word "citizen" with "resident."

Tim made a motion to send the letter as amended. Ni-Ama seconded.

Discussion: the motion implies that the chairperson will sign the letter and Josh suggested that Raquel update the Select Board in person with all the letters at once.

The motion passed by roll call vote with unanimous support.

School Mascot Letter:

James read the draft letter and Josh suggested using stronger language and Tim suggested this: "In order to make Groton a more welcoming community, we request that you change the

Groton Dunstable Regional School District mascot and name. Raquel questioned the need to mention Covid 19, and Josh also thought it did not need to be mentioned. There was some discussion of the definition of Crusaders and the image it conveys both within our community and to more diverse communities that travel to Groton-Dunstable for sports and activities. Tim agreed that a statement about the definition of Crusaders could be added. The intention is to draft a letter to the school board and ask the Select Board to co-sign.

Redskin Trail Letter:

James read the proposed letter. Josh questioned mentioning the Trust funds, and Michelle said that the Trust funds could help the residents. Ni-Ama thought that the Select Board might object to the entire letter if they object to using Trust funds. Tim suggested this sentence: "As such, we encourage the Select Board to explore funding as applicable to offset costs incurred by the residents or property owners." In the past, when street names changed when the 911 system was implemented, residents had to absorb the entire cost.

Michelle moved that the DTF send the letter as amended, strongly recommending the name change. Seconded by James.

Discussion: Josh wondered if we should send a letter commending the Indian Hill Music Center's name change, but Michelle thought it best to wait until they make an official announcement.

Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote with Josh Degen abstaining.

Immigration Policy Letter:

James read the draft letter and Nii-Ama asked for Gordon's views on it. Gordon said that it was never been police practice to enquire about immigration status, and he has been working on writing new policy for the police department. He also suggested that there were situations where asking people where they come from is necessary in investigating criminal activity. Josh thought we would be overstepping our bounds by recommending policy to the police department. James questioned the Police Chief's right to set policy, but Josh said Groton's Police Chief does have that right. After some discussion, it was decided that we write two letters, one to the Police Chief directly with a statement of support and specific suggestions, and one to the Select Board concerning the town wide policy for all employees. The working group will re-draft the letter with the first paragraph to go to the Select Board, and Gordon will draft a letter with paragraphs 2 and 3 for Police Chief Luth.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Next Meeting: April 20, 7pm. on Zoom.

DD 5/10/2021