Diversity Task Force

March 3, 2022

Virtual via Zoom

Meeting called at 7:01 by chair Majeski. Present: Michelle Collette, Amy Degen, Bhaskar Gupta Karpurapu, Susan Hughes, Deidre Mitchell, James Moore, Fran Stanley. Absent: Gordon Candow.

Deidra will record for the Groton Matters program on the Town Seal article next week. The conversation will not edited but recorded for posting to the Groton Matters FB page. Tuesday March 8 at 2:00 PM is the first listening session for the Select Board. Michelle, James and Fran plan to attend this session on behalf of the DTF. The second session is Tuesday March 29, 7:00 PM. James, Michelle and Raquel will attend. Both are in person at the Senior Center.

Action item: Michelle will confirm the senior center will allow a run through the day before the March 8 session.

Michelle attended the senior center “Can We Talk” civil discourse session on Monday. Nine people were present including the facilitator. Concerns included changing history, and concerns that we already vote on this (the town did not). Much of the angst was directed at the Diversity Task Force, and confusion about what the DTF is. Amy suggests the Select Board introduces the DTF, members and charge and then hand over the presentation to DTF. Susan noted member info and charge is on the town website for anyone who is interest. Dierdre emphasizes that education is essential on this issue and Susan agrees. Michelle reports that at Monday’s meeting the Select Board considered a ballot referendum on this article as well.

Action item: Raquel will send DTF background and bios to James and Deidra.

Action item: Michelle will ask Becky Pine to start the presentation and introduce the DTF and charge.

Community Outreach Committee report.

The goal is to create an event to celebrate diversity and offer a place to listen and share future hopes for the community. The proposal is for an exhibit style event with booths representing diversity. It would be a hands on arts and crafts activity, in partnership with RSJG, places of worship, the library, and civil discourse group. Fran suggests the idea of “open houses” where different diverse parts of town welcome the town for a meeting and understanding, and perhaps more acceptable to adult attendees. Susan reported the events that the RSJG are planning for events around Juneteenth, which includes another concert by Kevin Harris (with GPL) on 6/16 and an event with Jeffrey Boutwell (with GHC) on 6/19. They are also brainstorming something fun like a parade or picnic and would welcome collaboration. Michelle expounded on the anti-slavery contributions of George Boutwell, Jeffrey’s ancestor. Amy referenced the one-day cultural music festival as a way to share food and traditions and that it was very successful. Bhaskar suggested holding something at Grotonfest, to capitalize on an existing event. Suggested slogan for DTF: “We are Groton”.

Action item: The outreach committee will reconvene to absorb the ideas presented and come back with a more definitive plan.

Next DTF meeting: March 17 (green optional) to recap the first listening session and plan for the second.

Meeting was ended at 7:56 by chair Majeski.