

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
7:00p.m. THURSDAY, January 26, 2023.

Present:

X	David Martin, Select Board Liaison		Nathan Cookson
X	Diane Randolph Jones, Co-chair	X	Sunanda Pepalla
X	Julie Pierce	X	Lingya Zhou
X	Sandra Hinds, Clerk	X	Ruby Lillie
X	Melissa Kaplan Morse, Co-chair	X	Suravi Bhatia
X	Makena Muindi	X	Wanjiku Gachugi, Staff Liaison

**I. Regular Business**

Called to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. Notes from Co-Chair Melissa Kaplan Morse:

- The 2023 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast held at Congregation Beth Elohim was well attended. Tanisha Sullivan was the guest speaker.
- On February 4, 2023 the Acton Pride Gayla will be held at the Recreation Department. It will be from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- The screening of the film “Dawnland” will be on March 30, 2023 at the Bromfield High School (Cronin Auditorium) in Harvard, MA. A number of Commissioners expressed the desire to attend the event.

**II. Special Business**

2. Introduction of the New Acton DEI Director

The Commissioners were introduced to Wanjiku Gachugi. She comes to the position with a number of years of experience working as a community organizer, activist and educator. She has worked in the field of DEI from a health perspective. Ms. Gachugi is happy to be working in our town and she has already met a number of stake holders. She will be the town’s staff liaison to the DEIC.

3. What is the Commission’s role on other committees in town? We discussed that it will be beneficial for our members to be ambassadors to other committees. For example, Melissa Kaplan Morse went to the Open Space meeting where she learned about their current project, and she was able to connect with other volunteers.

We also discussed that our town is made up of one-third people of color yet many do not use the programs of the Recreation Department. If Commissioners attend an event, they can discuss it at the next meeting.

4. Information Sharing: We discussed the gap in getting information about what is happening in our town. The challenge is that information is shared in various constituent groups and not others. For example, if an incident happened at a specific school, the parents/caregivers received the information but not the other members of the Town. The Superintendent, Peter Light, is going to assemble a Leadership Coalition to combat hate and bias. Three meetings will be scheduled for February and March.
5. Acton Town Report: A summary of the Commission's work will be submitted on February 28, 2023.

### **III. Closing Items**

6. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting  
Julie Pierce moved and David Martin seconded to approve the minutes of December 8, 2022. Unanimously approved.
7. **Next meeting:** Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.
8. **Adjourn**  
David Martin moved and Melissa Kaplan Morse seconded to adjourn.  
Unanimously approved.  
Adjourned at 8:16 p.m.