

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION MINUTES  
7:00pm THURSDAY November 9, 2023

Present:

X	David Martin, liaison	X	Diane Randolph Jones, co-chair
	Julie Pierce		Lingya Zhou
	Makena Muindi		
X	Melissa Kaplan Morse, co-chair	X	Sandra Hinds, clerk
X	Sunanda Pepalla	X	Suravi Bhatia, student
X	Zayd Dhasthageer, student		Wanjiku Gachugi, liaison

**I. Regular Business**

Called to order at 7:11 p.m.

1. Notes from the Co-chairs—No reports.
2. Updates from the DEI Director: Wanjiku sent in her report and Diane read it as stated below.
  - There have been 4 reported incidents and all indicated they were racially motivated. Two of those also indicated ethnicity. The rights violated of the 4 bias reports were 2 in employment, 1 public accommodation, and the other was services. The document has all the categories and rights violated.
  - Laura and I with the ABUW are planning an upcoming community conversation. The title is “*Welcoming & Supporting our New Neighbors - A Community Conversation*” and will be on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 from 6:00-8:30 PM in the Community Room in the Human Services Building (30 Sudbury Road, Acton). If anyone would like more information, please email me [wgachugi@actonma.gov](mailto:wgachugi@actonma.gov) or Laura Ducharme [lducharme@actonma.gov](mailto:lducharme@actonma.gov)

The purpose of the community conversation is to bring community organizations and the Acton-Boxborough community together to “deepen our collective understanding of the new migrants journey and to strategize how we can best work together to support our new neighbors coming to our communities. A panel discussion will provide insight into Haitian culture and the immigration journey. Leaders from the community will share what we know, current plans, and anticipated needs. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and share ideas.” We will have two people who are Haitian immigrants sharing their stories, a representative from Dignity in Asylum (a Concord agency that will discuss the Asylum process) and the Shelter Manager from Making Opportunities Count (the agency running the shelter).

- On Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, we (Laura and I) held a workshop for Town staff, AB school district staff as well as community organizations on Haitian culture. The title of that workshop was “Fostering Cultural Humility: A Multi-Sectoral Approach to Integrating Haitian Migrants in New Communities.” Myrtise Maurice was the facilitator of this workshop and did an

excellent job in giving a background on Haitian history, culture, and ways we can understand and facilitate the needs of Haitian migrants.

## **II. Special Business**

1. Zayd introduced himself to those who were not able to attend the October meeting. He is a junior at ABRHS.
2. Julie resigned on November 7, 2023. The Commission was thankful for her time, dedication and guidance throughout the years. She was a wonderful committee member and her commitment was appreciated. The Commission has two open positions.
3. Committee Liaisons' reports:  
**Diane**—The Leadership Committee Against Hate and Bias Speech has evolved into a robust group of parents, students and community members. It has met at least once this school year.  
**Suravi**— A Diwali event will take place this month—November, 2023.  
**David**-- The Library Strategic Planning Committee will be meeting from November 2023 to the summer of 2024. Their goal is to come up with plans that will shape the future of the library. The meetings will be on Zoom.  
**Melissa**—There were 40 co-sponsors for the Walk Against Hate. There are plans underway for the MLK Breakfast in January 2024.

Speaker focus for upcoming meetings: Veterans Services Director, Sustainability Group, Police Chief, Jen Faber, Joanie Dean, and Peter Light.

Upcoming events—We will start the conversation about events that the DEIC can create/co-sponsor in 2024. The Commission is interested in discussing a resource fair at our next meeting.

There was a mention and reminder of the Town of Acton's celebration and recognition of Veterans Day-11/11/2023.

## **III. Closing Items**

Approve Minutes from previous meeting:

Sunada moved and Melissa seconded the approval of the minutes of October 12, 2023. Unanimously approved.

Confirm upcoming meeting – Thursday, December 14, 2023.

Adjourn

Sandra moved to adjourn and Melissa seconded. Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 8:06 p.m.