

MEETING MINUTES
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDIT)
Thursday, January 21, 2021
7:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Tara Figueroa, Chair
Jonathan Tropp, Vice Chair
Lincoln Johnson
Sue Neil
Ashleigh Pascarella
Melissa Usseglio
Amanda Wagner
Dan Wisneski

Also in attendance:

Jim Cordone, Town Attorney
Bill Chin, Meeting Facilitator

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Public Comment:

Christine El Eris, 4955 Madison Avenue

MOTION to approve December 17, 2020, minutes made by Mr. Tropp, seconded by Ms. Neil; motion carried by unanimous consent

MOTION to approve January 14, 2021, minutes made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Pascarella. Mr. Tropp asked that a typo be corrected (affected vs. effected), and asked the record to reflect that a speaker at the meeting (Gabby Tropp) is his daughter.

MOTION to accept the minutes with corrections and additions made by Ms. Wagner, seconded by Mr. Wisneski; motion carried by unanimous consent.

Communications Update: Secretary Wagner

In addition to Christine El Eris's email, Ms. Wagner shared feedback from the public hearing, as well as a communication from a resident expressing concern that Columbus Day is still listed as Columbus Day; there was also concern raised about a hetero-normative version of a marriage ceremony conducted at Middlebrook school.

Ms. Wagner also shared information about a training course for people of color to learn how to run for public office.

Commissioner Reports/Findings

EDIT logo competition: Ms. Pascarella shared the logo contest flyer; Mr. Tropp suggested asking the public to narrow down final choices and also asked Attorney Cordone if there needs to be a legal disclaimer/consent for town to use artwork; Attorney Cordone, Mr. Tropp, and Ms. Pascarella will work

together on language assigning usage rights to the town/EDIT; members also discussed ways for residents to submit their designs.

Summary of continued town stakeholder interview reports:

First Selectman—Ms. Neil summarized her meeting with the Frist Selectman and Human Resources Director Tom McCarthy; part of their discussion included civil service hiring practices, challenges found in hiring rules, and potential update to civil service selections.

Board of Education—Ms. Wagner shared her conversation with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Semmel. Ms. Wagner provided an update on a proposed coalition for social justice, including details on a steering committee with subcommittees to explore how social justice issues manifest in different areas of education; bringing in experts to train staff; curriculum changes/courses created; analysis and adjustment of English curriculum; K-5 social studies curriculum.

Ms. Pascarella inquired whether there is a place where people can see what is being done, and could EDIT share a link on their site to help people find the information?

Police Department—Ms. Figueroa will meet with Chief Lombardo during the week of January 27.

Civil Service/Human Resources—Ms. Figueroa will meet with Mr. McCarthy on January 26

Emergency Services—Mr. Tropp provided notes from his meeting with EMS Director Leigh Goodman

Information that the committee would like to see regarding Town employment includes key demographics whatever data is available by department and aggregate data

Mr. Johnson asked if EDIT could potentially conduct interviews with actual town employees, with an eye to supporting departments in their diversity goals. Ms. Usseglio suggested a survey to collect demographic data and employee sentiment

Planning & Zoning—Mr. Wisneski is compiling his notes from the interview and will provide to the committee; some items of discussion included ADA and regulations compliance.

ADA Compliance Coordinator—Mrs. Usseglio is scheduled to meet with Robert LoBrandi of Planning and Zoning; Mr. Wisneski will share his notes from his P&Z interview to streamline communication

Ms. Pascarella will contact the Trumbull Historical Society as another stakeholder interview.

Mr. Tropp addressed a question in the meeting chat from Joanne Orenstein regarding the Hawley House renovation; Ms. Usseglio noted that there is an ongoing dialogue about the renovation; Attorney Cordone said that there is nothing currently in front of P&Z ; Ms. Figueroa suggested they start a conversation with the developer to see what their intentions are.

Community Programming Ideas—Ms. Figueroa provided a list of some cultural identity celebrations to acknowledge throughout the year via social media; Ms. Usseglio met with the programming team at the Trumbull Library regarding a future collaboration with EDIT to recognize cultural identity celebrations and diversity.

Public Hearing Recap—minutes from the hearing are available; community members raised issues particularly in relation to schools.

Mr. Wisneski will share his conversation with Economic Development Director Rina Bakalar at the February meeting, particularly in regard to diversity in business ownership in Trumbull.

Ms. Wagner discussed affinity groups and how they can bolster the community; Mr. Tropp suggested that EDIT can support and amplify those groups, perhaps by inviting them to share at future meetings.

Westport TEAM—Ms. Figueroa asked committee members to send questions to her so she can provide them to the Westport TEAM chairperson ahead of the meeting.

New Business—MS. Wagner suggested the committee continue to look for free and/or low-cost trainings available for committee members.

MOTION to adjourn made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Tropp; motion carried by unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Submitted by Laura Shiel

Summary of Interview of Vicki Tesoro

First Selectman of Town of Trumbull

Date of interview: January 11, 2021

Attendees present: Vicki Tesoro, Tom McCarthy, Lincoln Johnson, Susan Neil, Tara Figueroa

The role of the First Selectman in Trumbull has two functions: 1) To manage the town at an operational level; and 2) serving a political role.

Vicki has been involved in local government for several years and throughout the course of her career has upheld her democratic values which includes a strong belief that diversity and inclusion is important.

At the town level, Trumbull's workforce is made up of both union and non-union employees. The departments that the Office of the First Selectman oversees include: Human Resources, Finance, Economic Development, Public Works and Tax Collection. During her tenure as the First Selectman, Vicki has hired two new department heads with equal opportunity in mind. During her tenure, there has also been an increase in gender diversity within Trumbull's department leadership.

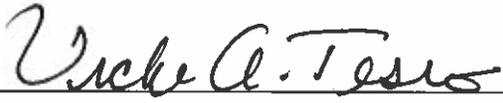
The Civil Services department is part of the town charter and oversees the hiring of all departments with a few exceptions (such as the First Selectman's administrative offices, BOE, EMS, and Nurse staff). It would be wonderful to streamline its hiring practices and increase the applicant pool to strengthen diversity within the town workforce. There are some challenges in navigating rules and contracts that would require us to take a step back and figure out how to create a more equitable system.

Tara Figueroa expressed that it may be helpful for EDIT to better understand the current demographics of the town employees and she would follow up with Tom McCarthy to see what publicly available information can be shared.

When it comes to boards and commissions, elected and volunteer officials are unpaid. How might EDIT be able to support the town to increase interest and involvement across our community to take part in local government?

Vicki thanked EDIT for its service and for taking the time to speak with her regarding her views. She welcomed the opportunity to touch base again with our committee in the future.

Reviewed and accepted:



Vicki Tesoro