

Pelham Anti Racism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: 11/16/2021

Meeting Facilitator: Roy Regozin

Meeting Note Taker: Charlie Lynch

Members in Attendance: Anne Stoddard, Charlie Lynch, Jessie Jean-Louis, Roy Regozin, Pat Schumm

Members Absent: Matteo Ramos-Mucci

Opening details:

Remote Meeting Script was read by Roy Regozin.

The Committee approved the minutes of October's meeting unanimously.

Working Group Reports:

1. EDUCATION (Roy, Pat, Jessie)

Jessie said the Education working group had a meeting with Mary Kiely, the Interim Curriculum Coordinator for Amherst, Pelham and the Amherst-Pelham Regional District Schools, regarding the information presented by Tom Fanning. Micki Darling, Interim Principal of Pelham Elementary School, joined. They discussed the ongoing comprehensive overhaul of the Mathematics K-12 curriculum, including how the subject should be taught. They also discussed Pelham Elementary School's experience with a teacher who conducts interventions in Reading and Mathematics with students who are having difficulty in those areas. This approach has been very effective..

Roy said the Education Working group requests the Committee to make an official recommendation to the Select Board to support the overhaul of the Math K-12 curriculum and the retention of a position for an intervention teacher at Pelham Elementary School in future years. The group discussed the benefits these recommendations could have and how the Select Board's support will help in budgeting for the position of intervention teacher. Roy presented a draft of the recommendations and said it is important that we get it sent as soon as possible. The Committee discussed the wording of the draft. Anne suggested we CC the School Committee. Pat said the Amherst elementary school has a similar position of intervention teacher. The group finalized the recommendation and directed Roy to send the recommendations to the Select Board..

2. GOVERNANCE and HOUSING (Charlie, Anne, Matteo)

The Governance and Housing groups have merged into one working group

Charlie said he and Anne met and discussed a plan for the group moving forward. They have a number of objectives. First, they are working on a recommendation for an outside professional to review the Town's bylaws, and specifically the zoning restrictions, to highlight any issues that may contribute to systemic racism, and to potentially suggest more inclusive policy changes. Secondly, they continued the discussion of creating an Anti-Discrimination Bylaw, and are researching ways to do so using state resources, such as the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. Thirdly, they are researching ways to advertise the new affordable housing and specifically how to get the relevant information to people that may often be outside the reach of the standard advertising practices. They are researching programs for this offered by HUD.

Anne said she will contact Pioneer Valley Planning. They have done work with the Planning Board and have worked with other towns in our area. Their website states that they do reviews for fair housing practices.

3. OUTREACH (Roy)

Roy said he sent the Committee the email he received from the Select Board. Jessie has been getting the numbers on Town employees, so that the Committee can make a suggestion for how many employees should receive anti-racism training.

Charlie asked if we should address the resignations and if a new quorum should be found. Roy said he thinks we should leave the quorum as it is, as five provides more assurance of a diversity of opinion than a smaller number. The Committee agreed. Charlie suggested we advertise the openings. Anne said we should put an article in the Pelham Slate. Pat volunteered to write something for publication in the Slate.

4. HISTORY

All the members of this group have resigned. Anne said she would reach out to past members to find out what they were working on. The Committee discussed preserving the working group currently with the hope that new members will join and pick up any work that may have been left unfinished.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY (Anne, Jessie)

There was no new information to discuss in Public Safety this month.

Closing details:

Next Meeting Date: Monday, December 13, 2021

Next Meeting Facilitator: Jessie Jean-Louis

Next Meeting Note Taker: Pat Schumm