



Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice and Belonging Committee

April 14, 2023

Meeting Minutes

City Council Chambers

9:15 a.m.

1. Mayor Bouley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:23 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Mayor Jim Bouley, Councilors Byron Champlin and Zandra Rice Hawkins.

Councilor Stacey Brown, residents Jessica Livingston, Michelle Hinebauch, Charm Emiko and City Clerk, Janice Bonenfant were also present.

2. Meeting overview by Committee Chair, Mayor Bouley.

Action: Mayor Bouley welcomed attendees to the meeting. Mayor Bouley, referring to an e-mail from Councilor Rice Hawkins, indicated that the goal for this meeting was to solidify meeting dates for community listening sessions allowing the committee to hear from community members who have been calling for DEIJB (Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice and Belonging Committee) efforts. The committee can then shape their work and processes around the needs identified by those already doing this work in Concord, especially those most impacted by how the City acts and responds around issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and belonging.

Mayor Bouley provided an overview of the committee's mission, goals and deliverables, as outlined below, indicating that the committee was established to design a scope of work and further deliverables to partner an outside organization.

Mission:

To create and sustain an inclusive process for public engagement so all Concord residents feel a sense of belonging and can authentically participate in the decision-making processes that impact their lives. Committee members noted that this is a starting point for the committee. Members acknowledged that their goals may change as they advance through the process.

Goals:

- Identify those characteristics that would make Concord a more welcoming, inclusive, just, and equitable place where all residents feel civically empowered with a sense of belonging.
- Develop approaches and initiatives that will assure the protection and promotion of those characteristics.
- Establish a model/protocol for community conversations that engage all residents such that the City and its committees can follow the practices set forth for future projects.

Deliverables:

- A series of facilitated conversations around the city to engage marginalized voices utilizing a team of trained facilitators able to assist in running conversations.
- A protocol for outreach to hard-to-reach communities, including a list of contacts for leaders within these groups who are willing to come together to discuss current topics.
- A proposal to City officials including the City's Public Information Officer on how to better harness digital and other relevant tools to reach all citizens.

3. Committee discussion.

Action: Committee members discussed dates for three community listening sessions, finalizing the following three dates; Tuesday, May 2nd at noon in City Council Chambers, which they stated would be a good time for local businesses to share their thoughts; Thursday, May 4th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at a location to be determined in Penacook; and Saturday May 6th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Citywide Community Center. Members suggested providing cookies and water for the May 4th meeting and pizza along with food from Batulo's Kitchen for the Saturday, May 6th meeting.

Following committee discussion, it was decided the format of the meetings would be as follows: First, Mayor Bouley, would introduce members of City Council as well as provide those in attendance with an overview of the DEIJB committee goals. Second, Councilor Champlin, would review what the City's DEIJB efforts are to date. Third, Councilor Rice Hawkins, would open discussion to members of the public to speak and share their thoughts, experiences, barriers, and/or stories.

Non-committee members shared their thoughts about the importance of holding multiple meetings. Non-committee members also suggested providing an outline of what has been done to date by the City providing attendees at the proposed listening sessions with an overview of what the City has accomplished to date.

After committee discussion, Councilor Rice Hawkins indicated she would compile a listing of those people and/or groups that could be sent an invitation to the various listening sessions so the City, on behalf of the committee, could email out a flyer/invitation to the listening sessions.

Councilor Rice Hawkins will forward the listing to the City Clerk. Committee members also discussed how community outreach would also be helpful to spread the word once dates and listening session locations have been finalized.

Mayor Bouley noted that he had a conversation with the Concord School District recently asking if they were interested in partnering with the City at some point in the future on this project.

Melissa Hinebauch suggested the City contact the Goffstown School District to see what their experience was as well as what challenges they faced when they created their "Courageous Community Conversations" series. While discussing Goffstown's program she referred to information she had previously submitted to City Council, providing them with contact information about those that worked on the initiative in Goffstown. Councilor Rice Hawkins asked Ms. Hinebauch to forward that information to the City Clerk.

Committee members discussed the possibility of placing a survey on the City's website soliciting feedback from those that may either not be able to attend the meeting and/or may not like speaking publicly.

Mayor Bouley indicated he envisioned the goals of the committee to be a multi-year project that may lead to the hiring of either a consultant or staff member(s) to continue working toward the committee's goals. He further stated that he expected that City Council would need to budget funds to cover those potential costs. Mayor Bouley indicated he further imagined that this committee would eventually be disbanded and perhaps replaced by a steering committee that would be charged with continuing to further create institutional structural changes within the City of Concord.

Councilor Brown suggested that perhaps the newly created positions within Community Development could take on some of the responsibilities Mayor Bouley discussed budgeting for.

Jessica Livingston urged the committee to work toward becoming a Welcoming City, not just a community within the State that passed a welcoming resolution. She referred to the City of Nashua that just went through the process of becoming a Welcoming City. Ms. Livingston indicated that becoming a Welcoming City would likely be a multi-year project.

4. Adjournment.

Action: At 10:27 a.m., there being no further discussion, Councilor Champlin moved to adjourn the meeting.

A true copy: I attest:

*Janice Bonenfant
City Clerk*