



Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice and Belonging (DEIJB) Committee

**Meeting Minutes**

February 18, 2025

City Council Chambers

37 Green Street

1. The Meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chair Nafshi.

**Present:** Rabbi Robin Nafshi, Chair, Mayor Byron Champlin, Zoey Murphy, Noemi Wierwille, Karen Juall, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Clement Kigugu, Sheila Zakre, Ghana Sharma, Vijay Bhujel, Alison Murphy, Councilor Ali Sekou. Amy Girourd-Crush arrived late

Becky Kennedy, Merrimack Valley School District Ex-Officio Member  
Cara Meeker, Concord School District Ex-Officio Member)

**Absent:** Moe Djabelarbi, Ahni Malachi and Usha Shrestha

DEIJB Facilitator Bird Guess, Founder and CEO of The Racial Equity Group, attended via Zoom Meeting

2. Approval of December 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Motion to Approve, Sheila Zakre and duly seconded. The item passed unanimously
3. Meeting Overview. Chair Nafshi informed the committee of a conversation with our consultant Bird Guess, to review the timeline which will be shared with the committee this evening.
4. Strategic Planning Session.  
Mr. Guess provided information from the Center for Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity. In sum, Executive Orders from the Federal Government, 14151 and #14173, which is related to ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing Executive Order #14151 and the “illegal DEI programs in the Office of the Management and Budget.” Executive Order #14173 “Ending addresses the Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity – to illuminate “illegal” DEI initiatives. Federal and Grant Recipients will not operate DEI programs that violate federal anti-discrimination laws. (No preferential treatment of protected classes). Difference between Illegal DEI versus Legal DEI. The overarching discussion was there is no court decision that has declared DEI best practices to be inherently illegal.

Councilor Sekou added his confirmation in his private role that agreed with Mr. Guess' summary.

5. Overview of project timeline and expectations (Handout) Meeting twice per month on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in an effort to complete tasks by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Feedback from the committee was the aggressive schedule meets the objective.
  - a. Would attendance be available via Zoom if the room has a quorum. Mayor Champlin will follow up with legal for response.
6. Determine Foundational DEIJB training dates and times beginning March 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> (2-hour sessions) with an in-person visit in March.
  - a. Session #1 – Foundational DEIJB to get the committee with a shared language, purpose and understanding of why disparities and inequities exist and persist
  - b. Session #2 – What are the Best Practices for operationalizing DEIJB within City Government to identify best practices for measuring, monitoring and managing data through City operations.
7. Identify key stakeholders and community groups who serve underrepresented populations for participants in focus groups (by protected classes) using the demographic data matches the benchmark for our interviews and focus groups. Thinking far and wide on stakeholders throughout the community; housing authorities, living or working in Concord, all stakeholders.
  - a. Safety for attendees was discussed and listening sessions also as a possibility. What do we want to identify as these lived experiences here in Concord.
8. Develop focus group interview survey questions. Review the focus group script and questions and provide feedback and suggestions for questions. These would be capped for attendance. We want deep participation and personalization to develop themes from the data. The information would be confidential. Listening Session before the committee would be open meetings. In the Focus Groups, this would be confidential. Anyone can sign up to participate, but the meeting would be closed. The question arose as to whether these focus groups could be held confidentially. Mayor Champlin will be following up with the City Solicitor to assure we can hold these meetings. Potential for fear to participate may be elevated under the current climate. People may want to contribute their thoughts just through a survey. How are we going to identify these groups? To assure there is representation from all demographic areas.
9. DEIJB committee feedback on focus groups interview questions
  - a. Session #3 and #4 – Strategic Planning Session 4, April 1<sup>st</sup>: Review DEIJB committee structure and purpose questionnaire.
  - b. Session #5 April 15<sup>th</sup> – discuss DEIJB committee purpose, structure and size, duration, meeting frequency, roles and responsibilities.
  - c. Begin Focus Group Interviews (TBD) (60-minute interviews with 8 to 10 questions with deep engagement. About 10 participants per group
  - d. MAY Prepare the first draft of the Focus Group Report

- e. Analyze statements from participant using quantitative coding and identify patterns and themes
  - f. Strategic planning sessions for May obtain feedback on focus group data.
  - g. How to engage with the public in June with our findings, what are next steps, recommended Action Plan to serve all residents and all stakeholders.
10. Review objectives of DEIJB Foundational Training (see above)
  11. Determine dates and times for strategic planning sessions beginning April (see above)

Public Input:

Resident Zandra Rice-Hawkins referenced the August 2022 meeting minutes with the breakdown of the demographic information, as well as past meeting summaries of the community engagement. May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023 for the review. Additionally, the concerns for safety echoed.

Meeting notices are also an issue. It is important for people to know when the meetings are and these included in the city alerts and City Manager's Newsletter. Zandra will forward these to the Mayor Champlin, Chair Nafshi and the City Clerk.

Members of the committee expressed concern about safety for the committee as well. Fear in the community is elevated everywhere and we need to be aware of this, and ready response. One persons feeling of safety is not the same as another's and we should all be aware of this.

12. Adjournment. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Councilor Sekou and was duly seconded. The motion passed. The meeting closed at 7:39 p.m.

*Submitted by:*

*Councilor Jennifer Kretovic*