

Meeting Minutes

Town of Hartford Committee on Racial Equity and Inclusion

Wednesday May 20, 2022

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Video Recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/9MZsbOH55ltOGLPv00HBcLMTQtnLX6a8gCIMr_QPnU393sL1QvsOXmgE0jB29iv1

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Time	Agenda Topic	Committee Action
6:10 PM.	Call to order/Welcome Consent Agenda (Approve May 6, 2020 Minutes)	
In Attendance: Sara Campbell, Michelle Boleski, Joe Major, Alicia Barrow, Ann Reynolds, Allene Swienckowski, John Hall Community Members - Jameson Davis, Arielle King, Nancy Gabriel, Rebecca Whitney		
6:15 PM	Acknowledge Community Members A presentation by Jameson Davis & Arielle King as Vermont Law School Schweitzer Fellows. Their project is called "A Teacher's Guide to Implementing EJ (environmental justice)". Community Members Questions and Input	

- Schweitzer Program - Albert Schweitzer Fellowship - Nancy Gabriel Fellowship Chair
- The Schweitzer Fellowship is a Public Service Project determinant of health typically in an underserved community
- Arielle and Jameson are VT Law School Schweitzer Fellows - 2020-2021
- Their project will focus on creating a Teacher's Guide -based on VT State's H3 Act 1 - An Act relating to ethnic and social equity standards for public schools
- The basic framework will fold black history (as well as the histories of Native Americans, Asian, Latinx and women) into current courses taught to Middle School students via Environmental Justice. The work will augment the existing curriculum. Hopefully this work will ease difficult conversations that typically accompany these issues and to assist teachers in feeling more comfortable addressing these topics in a classroom setting. The aim is to seamlessly add these additional tools without increasing additional teacher hours.
- The project will be focused on the students and their experiences, especially students of color who may be the only student of color who may be the only person in a class or the entire

school. ially for students of color who may be the only person. The project will use resources and personal experiences to provide a guide to supplement teachers when having those conversations. All schools in the state of Vermont will eventually have to adopt equity and social equity standards based solely on the passage of H3 Act One. For the Schweitzer Fellows this is a good time to partner with administrators, teachers and community organizations. (like HCOREI and other racial/social justice organizations)

- The Fellows will establish an Advisory Board designed to provide touchpoints and feedback for the project, such as ensuring that important topics are covered in the additional EJ. Jameson and Arielle have spoken with Coach Kevin Christie as well as Tom Debalsi, Superintendent of o Hartford VT schools about their Fellowship project and both have agreed to access and input. .
- Jameson and Arielle asked for a representative for the Advisory Board from HCOREI to support ongoing support for their project over the next year with the intent of reaching out to that representative with questions and assistance during the creation and implementation progresses.
- Project will focus primarily on middle school students at this time. Arielle has found middle school students as eager to learn, ask good questions, with the capacity to easily make and understand the connections between social and racial justice issues.
- The fellows requested information from HCOREI members with Middle School staff connections that might assist them.
- To date, the fellows have met with Ottauquechee Elementary School, 5th grade teacher Nancy Burke
- The conversation focused on sustainability of the project as well as how to make sure the project is framed correctly to last into the future with the idea that project itself is sustainable.
- A symposium by the fellows targeted for next spring for teachers will focus on training and how to use the guide so teachers will develop a sense of comfort and confidence with teaching the materials utilizes this type of work
- The project would expand beyond Black History Month and be taught as an inclusive item throughout the school year.
- A committee member asked what kind of time commitment would the liaison need to be on the Advisory Committee. The response: three to five times over the next year. The Advisory Board will develop touchpoints and times to send the document to the School Board and administers for feedback/review.
- A question was posed to the fellows, “what stumbling blocks will they have to get over?”
- A response from Rebecca Whitney. “Currently, teachers are absorbed with remote learning right now. To present the project will be perceived as ‘one more thing on an already overloaded plate.” The project will have greater acceptance if presented as a top down initiative, although seasoned/veteran teachers might balk at the perception of additional work
- It was suggested that if the symposium came with Continuing Education Units and to also supply the teachers with a bit of a shopping list, meaning, giving them the right to make choices about the areas that they want to engage will result in higher acceptance.
- The Hartford Strategic Plan will also lend influence.
- A new Secondary Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum will start in the Fall.
- It was suggested by Michelle that Hartfords consider the impact of hiring a Equity Coordinator, based loosely on the work already occurring in Brattleboro.
- Michelle also stated that the Tech Center hired a Math Coordinator to provide a math background to the courses taught in the Tech Center. In other words, an Equity Coordinator could also assist with the seamless addition of racial/social justice into courses.
- It is imperative that the project work with someone trained to engage the teachers

- At the close of their presentation Jameson and Arielle requested the name of HCOREI's liaison prior to our next meeting, if possible.

Ann questioned the rules about taking a discussion into Executive Session about sending a letter to the School/Select boards.

Allene - Conversations will cover the content of the letter.

John - Will a vote be taken on the letter and its content after the Executive Session?

Allene responded "yes."

Alicia read Executive Session Rules

Allene - Falls under contract with Vermont Partnership and the implementation of the Strategic Plan

Alicia makes a motion for the meeting to move to Executive Session. The session will also address the current status of applications for applicants to HCOREI and information regarding the implementation of the Strategic Plan in regards to the contract with Vermont Partnership.

Joe Seconded the motion.

Community members "leave" the meeting.

6:54 PM Adjourn to Executive Session
 Brief Discussion of HCOREI applicants

Votes taken for individual applicants.

Allene will communicate with all three applicants and present HCOREI selection to School/Select Boards

7:06 Sara made a **Motion** exit Executive Session

Michelle seconded.

Ann made a Motion to invite Giovanna Munfa to join the HCOREI -

Joe seconded

The motion passed unanimously

7:09 PM Review and Approve Letter to Town Manager, Select & School Boards re:
 Strategic Plan

- Allene read letter
- Sara asked if we should add encourage that the Communications Officer would be a good first step
- Ann countered with "it is premature."
- John - seconded the idea. Let the letter stand and have the Communication Strategy be a later suggestion
- Michelle thinks the addition of a Communication Strategy should be an addition to the letter.

Ann made a Motion to accept the letter as written.

Alicia seconded the motion.

A vote was taken to send the letter as is and passed unanimously.

7:16 PM Unfinished and Open Subjects

- An affirmative response from Nancy to attend at least one meeting a month -
- Nellie Mae Grant and Response From Brannon Godfrey and steps forward
- Allene has approached Vital Communities about the Nellie Mae Grant. Vital Communities will have a much broader reach than Hartford in addressing the issue of having an Ombudsman/person to address issues of underserved communities in the Upper Valley.
- Per Brannon, if HCOREI wants to pursue a grant, any grant, HCOREI must first receive approval from the Select and School Boards prior requesting a grant.
- The matter has been tabled until further information can be acquired.

- Town Manager Search Application - Allene applied. Our two Select Board members were queried about how many applications were submitted. What is the application deadline?
- Further discussion about the process was tabled based on Select Board confidentiality about specifics of the process.
- Attach a new copy of the roadmap for all HCOREI members review
- Form a sub committee to really delve into the strategic plan
- How do we approach absorbing the plan. Ann recommended that we start with the first recommendation on the timeline?
- Ann will review and then report at our next meeting the first three months of the implementation - (plan attached)
- A discussion about the open Select Board seat. It was determined that the Select Board will select and then appoint the new member. It is currently unclear if the appointment will serve until March 2021 or through November, 2020.
- Have to have a special election in November to add to the general election - length of session

7:20 PM Past Business to poll absent members about future meeting days/time.

Future HCOREI Meeting Dates

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- June 3 and 17,
 - July 1, July 15,
 - August 5, August 19

7:39 PM Adjournment
