

Minutes

Recording:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_eIJtKWbxP3k9i5_fwuvVfV7qlZSvQ4H/view

Town of Hartford Committee on Racial Equity and Inclusion
Wednesday June 17, 2020
6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Time	Agenda Topic	Committee Action
6:00 PM	Call to Order/Welcome	

In Attendance: Allene, John, Ann, Joe, Sara, Michelle
Community: Kim Souza, Rebecca Whitney, Patrick Autilio

Consent Agenda

(Approve June 3, 2020 Minutes) - Sara moves approve - Joe second. Passed unanimously

6:05 PM. Discuss Draft of Implementation Grid Lists for Strategic Plan:

What is HCOREI'S ROLE TO BE?.

1. Mary Gannon and Curtiss Reed of the Vt Partnership for Fairness & Diversity and developers of the Hartford Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan gave a presentation to the Selectboard 6/16/20 (Allene, Michelle and Ann attended the meeting); Mary and Curtiss encouraged the Board to begin with training (the concept of training is not tied to short term anti-bias courses, but should begin by having tough discussions about race) ASAP, encouraging the town leaders, tha is the Select Board, School Board and HCOREI to begin their implementation process with having those difficult conversations among themselves. Change must begin at the top. In order for the Strategic Plan to work, is for the two governing bodies of the Town to commit to have the tough conversations and to commit the time necessary to lead the Town and School District to adopt and implement Hartford's unwavering commitment to diversity recommended in the Plan. Curtiss strongly suggested that HCOREI guide the process of implementation to ensure that specific benchmarks occur in a timely manner.
2. Curtiss also noted the importance of having specific questions framed to be used In the process for hiring the new Town Manager. It is imperative that the Selection Committee can easily identify individuals with the skill and expertise to support the Strategic Plan prior to hiring a new Town Manager.
3. Allene confirmed with Dan, chair of the Select Board, that Allene, on the Selection Committee for the new Town Manager, would be able to discuss with Curtiss and Mary best practices, vetting along with specific interview questions for candidates for the position.
4. Kim Souza (Selectboard member) expressed her understanding that the school/town will be charged with implementing the Plan.

5. Ann asked if HCOREI has or should have a role in the implementation of the Strategic Plan? Ann also stated that the Select and School Boards have not responded to a letter written by HCOREI and sent to the respective Boards about being able to monitor the progress of the Plan. As of this meeting, HCOREI has not been requested to do anything in regards to the Strategic Plan.

6. Allene and Ann reported that Select Board members discussed a retreat.

Michelle mentioned that the School Board holds annual retreats in either July or August (the actual date and an agenda have not yet been confirmed).

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7. Discussion:

Ann: Could HCOREI have a retreat to have the difficult conversations and ideas for our role in implementation of the Strategic Plan and not wait to be asked to do this?

John: We don't need to wait to know about the agenda for the Town & School Boards before we act.

Sara/John: We said we were going to spend time discussing point by point the recommendations stated in the Strategic Plan. The more we know about the recommendations will in turn help to us make decisions about our level of involvement in the process.

Joe: I sense some urgency around that this process needs to begin now. WE all have to understand that this is a long term process.

Alicia: The biggest thing is for us to understand and then process the plan -

Allene: Do we need a sub committee to break down the plan?

John: I think we need all of us in a virtual session where we drill down on the Plan using Ann's month by month list of expectations for the report's recommendations.

John: Made a Motion that HCOREI schedule a retreat (virtual) to discuss the topics of the Strategic Plan for Inclusion and equity. Sara seconded - passed unanimously

Ann: Suggested a doodle poll, because we want all of us to attend. Ann also wants Giavanna and

Nancy involved in these discussions.

Allene: Agreed to a Doodle Poll. - want Giovanna and Nancy there.

6:54 - Juneteenth -

Alicia:

Thank you Ann for getting the announcements on all the Upper Valley Listservs. The celebration will be totally virtual. The celebration will be warned at the Town Hall attended by all Select Board members. Some speakers might also meet at the Town Hall but most will be virtual.

Agenda - <https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/3702/Juneteenth-2020-POSTER>

Alicia and Joe will read Proclamation at 6 pm

7:01 PM. Discussion – how do we go about setting up an independent body

to investigate allegations of alleged police misconduct?

Allene: We need to understand the power of our local Police Collective Bargaining Agreement

Ann: Could we have a sub-committee to reach out to the Police Chief to understand their needs for citizen input like a Citizens Review Board, not to police the police, but to educate ourselves who they are and what they do. To understand their policies and to see if we could work into a

partnership to receive allegations of misconduct. Some concern expressed over creating a separate body, and comparing our police department with large city police departments and unions is a different landscape. Are there means and mechanisms to help our police to be better connected to the community?

Kim is still working on the current Police and Town policies to coordinate with the Strategic Plan with policies that exist; she and Ann will start work on these as a sub-committee.

General agreement that because of current events there will also be a lot of suggestions, nationally, surrounding the topics of police policies, how complaints are handled and oversight.

7:14 PM Discuss Partnering with other local organizations to execute equity and inclusion on a broader level.

Ann mentioned that there were requests from faculty, students at Hanover High School to understand how HCOEI started. A faculty member approached Ann and asked if, in the future, we could meet with them when they are ready to approach the Hanover Town Council to create a similar entity like HCOEI.

Sara noted that the Hanover School District just did an equity audit.

Further suggestions: discussion about recruiting/retaining BIPOC employees in the area; noted two BIPOC persons on Selectboard. Joe made strong statement that people can be recruited in spite of the inferred drawbacks of residing here, that is, a rural area with limited cultural attractions, the cold.

7:36 PM In closing, Allene offered the following:

In view of the recent murders of black men and women, it is also important for HCOEI to understand the following statement made by Andre Leon Talley, a black fashion designer and journalist. He was described by a biographer as being “completely unaware of his blackness, that the concept of his being a Negro was completely submerged.” Talley responded, “Racism moves under the epidermis as a constant, constant reality. It’s a part of the fabric of our existence.”

7:36 PM Adjournment