

Pelham Anti Racism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: 1/25/2021

Meeting Facilitator: Jessie Jean-Louis Meeting Note Taker: Joe Davis

Members in Attendance: Anne Stoddard, Charlie Lynch, Jake Klar, Jessie Jean-Louis, Joe Davis, Roy Regozin, Pat Schumm, Jacqueline Faison

Members Absent: Karen Ribeiro, Dan Robb, Matteo Ramos-Mucci

Additional attendees from the public: Michael Hussin

Opening details:

Remote committee participation order was read by Roy Regozin.

Meeting was called to order by Jessie at 7:07pm EST.

Roy motioned to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2020 meeting and December 9, 2020 meeting. Charlie seconded the motion, which was then approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Committee size and membership was addressed by Jessie. Anne reported that not all emails for sending out a committee membership survey were able to be delivered. The topic was put on hold until after the working group reports.

Working Group Reports:

1. EDUCATION (Roy, Pat, Jessie)

Jessie reported that she and Pat have been reaching out to the district administration and met with the superintendent to find out what work regarding anti-racism has been occurring until now and how it has gone and what, if anything, has been added during any of their tenures in the district.

A district-wide anti-racism curriculum is rolling out soon. There has been a handful of calls and emails pushing back on the idea claiming the topic is too political for kids of elementary-school age.

The curriculum is not yet available for the public to view and won't be until approved by the school committee.

2. GOVERNANCE (Charlie, Joe)

Charlie mentioned that the policy and governance working group has been through all of the available bylaws looking for any that seemed to open the door to potential discrimination, and that a draft of a proposed set of general non-discrimination bylaws to consider for submission to the select board was available for the committee to review as well as some language around repealing or replacing other bylaws.

Anne raised the question of what the procedure is or should be about submitting any proposed bylaws to the select board and if it should be the whole committee that votes to send anything to the select board.

Roy suggested that recommendations to the select board come from the full committee as opposed to coming directly from any working groups.

Anne mentioned that while the working groups don't have to follow open meeting laws, for the sake of transparency, anything sent from this committee to the select board should come from the whole group since our meetings are public and it would give people a chance to see what we're proposing the select board act on.

Pat suggested that since a quorum is needed to make decisions, it would be better to avoid communication from a working group that gave the appearance of representing the entire committee.

Jessie pointed out that time would be needed for any members to process any proposed communication to the select board before deciding anything.

Anne asked about clarification around what the select board is looking for from this committee and how any recommendations should be passed to the select board. Individuals shouldn't be inhibited from direct communication with the select board, but it would be good to find out if the select board prefers that any initial communication about a subject come from the whole committee. Anything sent to the select board would have more weight if it came from the whole group instead of a working group.

Charlie read the [proposed non-discrimination bylaw chapter](#) aloud.

Roy questioned the specificity of matters covered in the proposed policy and mentioned it may not be covering everything that perhaps should be covered.

Anne suggested reaching out to the select board about determining the process for hearing recommendations: can they come from individual working groups or should they be from the whole committee.

Charlie offered to reach out to the select board to inquire about the communication process between the committee and the select board.

3. OUTREACH (Roy, Dan)

Roy reported that the outreach working group is still looking to get more information from Amherst and looking for sources of information that could help the committee.

4. HOUSING (Charlie, Anne, Dan)

Charlie reported no updates from the housing working group.

Anne mentioned that there are two Habitat For Humanity housing applications that opened in Pelham and that the affordable housing project is moving forward.

Charlie reminded everyone that the affordable housing meeting is this Wednesday (1/27/21).

5. HISTORY (Jake, Joe, Karen, Dan)

Jake reported no updates from the history group at this time.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY (Anne, Jessie, Jake, Karen)

Jessie reported that the public safety working group met with our state representative and state senator where they talked about the recent passing of a police reform bill. The group has also been reaching out to surrounding towns about any anti-racism initiatives they have taken relative to policing. They are hoping to get a meeting with the Pelham police chief soon.

Closing details:

The topic of committee size and membership was addressed again. The select board recently voted to reduce the number of anti-racism advisory committee members from 15 to 11 and requested a list of all active members and those who are no longer active who have been sworn in by the town clerk.

Jessie brought up the idea of creating a contact list of all members, but the topic was tabled until the next meeting since the results of a committee membership survey were unavailable for discussion. The select board will get an update on the matter at a later date.

The next agenda will cover:

- A review of the minutes from this meeting
- The proposed bylaw changes
- Committee survey results
- Working group reports

Roy moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Charlie. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm EST after a unanimous roll call vote.

Next Meeting Date: Monday, February 22, 2021

Next Meeting Facilitator: Charlie Lynch

Next Meeting Note Taker: Roy Regozin