



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Mary Bylone, First Selectman

Ad Hoc Committee for Diversity & Inclusion Minutes Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 6 p.m.

Via Zoom

Members Present: Denise Turner, Isaiah Stewart, Joanne Rose, Roberta Avery,
Lisa Johnson, Denise Mizla and Youth and Social Services Liaison Valerie Geato,
Liaison Joanne Philips and Rev. Lauren Lorincz.

1. **Call to order:** Meeting Called to Order by D. Turner at 6:03 pm.
2. **Additions or Deletions to Agenda:** None
3. **Citizens Comments:** M. Tomasi spoke in favor of and offered support to the committee. T. Pineau spoke in favor of the committee's formation and expressed her interest in diversity in the Town of Colchester.
4. **Approval of Minutes from the September 8, 2020 Meeting:** R. Avery motioned to approve, seconded by D. Mizla. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**
5. **Discussion on the structure of the Commission and establishing a charge to go in front of the Board of Selectman:** D. Turner spoke about CCM Cares meeting "Getting Comfortable with the Uncomfortable". Members discussed areas that the Commission would be addressing. The areas identified are Education, Housing, Youth Programs, Transportation, Law Enforcement, Public Awareness, People with Disabilities and Town Hiring Practices. It was reported that Superintendent Burt said it has been difficult to attract more diverse staff to come teach in town. J. Philips mentioned incentives for teachers to take positions in urban schools. D. Mizla suggested the possibility of securing grants for teacher salaries. D. Turner discussed the need for more affordable housing options. Recent new construction of single family homes are starting around \$400,000 which is far too high for many to afford. J. Philips said religious institutions have a large presence in people's lives and they are capable of swaying views on issues surrounding inclusion. V. Geato discussed the Youth Uprise Group that was established. An anti-racism workshop was held with high school students. She said she can work with the Anti-Defamation League to develop an online forum. J. Rose said people of color feel they might not be welcomed in a town like Colchester. She said it is important for the town to promote a sense that this

community cares about diversity and inclusion. Access to public transportation to move more easily throughout the area like in other communities could help.

6. **Next Steps:** D. Mizla will contact Shannon Ramsby. V. Geato will work on Youth Services ideas. I. Stewart will reach out to Town Law Enforcement. J. Rose will connect with the school system committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. R. Avery will ask Patty Watts from the Senior Center to join a future meeting. L. Johnson will contact Chuck Maynard, President of the Colchester Business Association to include the CBA and business owners. D. Turner will include the P&Z Committee to address possible barriers to affordable housing. November and December meetings will be used to develop the committee action to be presented in the January/February time frame.
7. **Next Meeting** will be Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at 6:00 pm.
8. **Adjourn:** Motion to Adjourn made by R. Avery and 2nd by I. Stewart. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.** Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.