RACIAL EQUITY and JUSTICE TASK FORCE MISSION STATEMENT

The U.S. Constitution, Connecticut Constitution, and Civil Rights Act of 1964, guarantee equal treatment of every citizen regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Although Fairfield has always strived to fulfill this mandate we can always do better. Towards that goal and in recognition of this fact, pursuant to Section 6.1(E) of the Fairfield Town Charter, the First Selectwoman, Brenda L. Kupchick, is hereby proposing to the Board of Selectmen, the formation of an advisory committee entitled Racial Equity and Justice Task Force (REJTF). The purpose of the task force shall be to study and advise the Board of Selectman (BOS) on existing Town policies and procedures in an effort to enhance and improve Fairfield's commitment to the systemically fair and equal treatment of all Town residents, businesses, workers and visitors, regardless of race.

The mission of the REJTF is to identify any racial and ethnic inequalities and injustices in the Town governance and operations and to provide the BOS with proposals and improvements to effectively minimize or eliminate them. Using measurable data, interviews, and any other means deemed appropriate by the BOS, the REJTF will analyze, examine, and document these injustices – past and/or present - to promote, support, and identify equitable opportunities and outcomes for all residents of Fairfield. The REJTF will make formal recommendations for consideration to the BOS towards the implementation of Town policies and procedures that benefit all residents. Any recommendations adopted by vote of the BOS will then be presented by the BOS to the appropriate Town body for their consideration and action.

SCOPE OF WORK/ACTION STEPS

The REJTF will accomplish its mission through the collection and examination of qualitative and quantitative data, active listening, convening conversations, identifying best practices, and collaborating with existing organizations to formulate a racial equity plan for the town of Fairfield.

Key to the success of the Task Force is:

-Data-Based Decision Making

The REJTF will use metrics and quantifiable data to evaluate and analyze Town programs, services, policies, and practices through the lens of racial equity to reveal any racial disparities. The Task Force will help disaggregate data by race and ethnicity to gain a deeper understanding of potential disparities.

-Community Engagement

The REJTF will listen to the needs and concerns of all residents with compassion and empathy; it will engage with residents in conversations and educational programs on racism and inequality. The Co-Chairs of the Task Force will be responsible for conducting all meetings in compliance with Robert's Rules of Order and with the decorum and civility expected of all public meetings. The REJTF will focus on its charge and not allow or sanction overt political causes to detract from its purpose.

-Advocacy and Continuous Learning
The Task Force is committed to deepening its' collective understanding of institutional racism and how it may impact racial equity in Fairfield; the Task Force will work to improve resident's skills in countering racism. Towards this goal, REJTF will collaborate with other organizations working to address racial inequities in our community, tapping the knowledge of various experts and community stakeholders who are working to end racial injustice and inequity; the Task Force may also collect and curate said resources and make them available to residents.

-Policies, Procedures, Ordinances and Charter Review
As part of its mandate, the REJTF will review town policies (i.e. ordinances, department procedures, etc.) to explore where there may be explicit or implicit racial biases, which contribute to racial inequity in all aspects of Fairfield governance with a goal of providing formal recommendations to the BOS. This will include the development of a Racial Equity Plan, which will provide a "blueprint" to address equity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Fairfield. The REJTF will formally present the Racial Equity Plan to the BOS no later than January 31, 2022.

Task Force Membership & Organization
The REJTF will have 11 members who will serve with intentionality, awareness, and an on-going commitment to implementation. The members will be selected by a majority vote of the BOS. Members shall be selected through a formal application process as designed by the BOS. Individual members will function to create an environment that is safe, supportive, and inclusive for all residents, including people who identify as black, brown and/or people of color; the members will represent the two major political parties as well as unaffiliated/independents. Members shall be residents of Fairfield.

In recognition of the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender and class represented in Fairfield, the Task Force membership should reflect the diversity of our Town. To achieve its mission and strengthen our ability to be a more fair and just community, it is essential that the Task Force membership be reflective of the demography of Fairfield.

Among the 11-member body, a representative from the BOS will participate on this Task Force as its Co-Chair for the term of this committee; this will ensure the Task Force has the Town leadership necessary to generate a town-wide, coordinated effort within Fairfield, as appropriate.

The other Co-Chair (not an elected official) will also serve the same term who has shown a commitment to social justice and reflects the minority community. This person will be selected through the application process, as will each of the additional nine (9) members of the Task Force, as provided for herein.

TERM

The REJTF charge will expire January 31, 2022 or once a plan has been adopted by the appropriate town bodies, whichever comes first. At that time, the task force will either transition its charge and the execution of its recommendations to other appropriate town of Fairfield Departments or have been replaced by a yet-to-be-constituted task force or steering committee.