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RACIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 6, 2022
6:00pm
Meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Co-Chair Nancy Lefkowitz and Gina Ludlow; Steve Bogan, Ryan Odinak. Inni Dhingra, Jason Sherrod, Sandra Tallman, Tameisha Powell-Dunmore.

Members Absent: Doug Bunnell, Karen Lynch

Others Present: Task Force Ad Hoc Volunteers: Kathy Wiant, Jamie Forbes, Matt Danzer, Emma Kayes

Draft Minutes

- I. Call to Order by Ms. Lefkowitz at 6:07pm. Recording started
- II. To hear, consider and act on approval of the draft Racial Equity and Justice Blueprint for the Town of Fairfield.

Ms. Lefkowitz moved to accept the draft Racial Equity and Justice Task Force Blueprint for the Town of Fairfield. Ms. Dhingra seconded.
Discussion ensued resulting in the following motions to make amendments to the Blueprint:

1-*Title* page: Ms. Lefkowitz moved to amend the image on page one to a more gender inclusive photo with hands. Ms. Dhingra seconded. No discussion.
Motion passed.

2-*Contents* page: Discussion ensued regarding the titles of Sections III and IV.
Ms. Lefkowitz moved to change the titles to:

III. Initial and Immediate Actions for the BOS.

IV. Additional Recommendations

Ms. Dhingra seconded. Motion passed.

3-*Membership & Acknowledgements* page: Ms. Lefkowitz moved to change the order of the task force member names so that they are in proper alphabetical order. Ms. Odinak seconded. Motion passed.

4-Experiencing Racism in Fairfield section: Discussion ensued regarding the use of the word “many” in paragraph three because it implies a quantitative measure. Ms. Dhingra moved to remove the word “many. Ms. Powel-Dunmore seconded. Motion passed.

5- III. Initial and Immediate Actions for the BOS section: Discussion ensued regarding the use of the word “systemic” in the third recommendation which calls for a formal proclamation to be made by the Town.

Ms. Lefkowitz moved to change the third recommendation to read as follows:

“The Town of Fairfield shall make a formal proclamation, and adopt a subsequent resolution, acknowledging the existence and impact of a combination of systems that disadvantage BIPOC residents in access and opportunity in Fairfield, and committing to addressing racial equity and justice in town governance and town operations.”

Ms. Dhingra seconded. Motion passed with one abstention from Ms. Powell-Dunmore.

There was further discussion after the motion to clarify what constitutes a formal proclamation.

6- III. Initial and Immediate Actions for the BOS/ Rationale section:

Ms. Lefkowitz moved to remove the sentence, “The REJTF supports acknowledging racism as a public health crisis “and to replace it with “On Tuesday, June 1st, the State of Connecticut in a vote of 114-33, declared racism a public health crisis in Connecticut; twenty-one Connecticut municipalities have declared racism a health crisis and are taking steps to fight it.” Ms. Dhingra seconded. Motion passed.

7- III. Initial and Immediate Actions for the BOS/ Additional resources section:

Ms. Lefkowitz moved to add an additional resource – CCD. Racism and Public Health. Ms. Odinak seconded. Motion passed.

8-IV. Additional Recommendations/2. Criminal Justice and Policing/CT Racial Profiling Report, 2018 section: Ms. Lefkowitz moved to add a sentence to the end of this section as follows: “For a more accurate assessment of current state, the REJTF recommends a follow up study.” Ms. Dhingra seconded. Motion passed.

9- IV. Additional Recommendations /Housing/Current Situation section: Ms. Lefkowitz moved to add a paragraph to the end of this section as follows:

“The Director of Community and Economic Development, acting as the Town’s Fair Housing Officer, receives and responds to complaints alleging violations of federal or state fair housing laws. While the Director provides regular training on fair housing matters to the Fairfield Board of Realtors and provides guidance and counsel to those with

questions, the Director currently has limited resources to manage this process thoroughly. Consequently, once initial information is gathered from a complainant, the matters are typically referred to the Connecticut Fair Housing Center (or to HUD/CHRO) for a more thorough investigation and possible enforcement action.”

Ms. Odinak seconded. Motion passed.

10- IV. *Additional Recommendations /Housing/ Recommendations* section: Ms. Lefkowitz moved to add another recommendation to the Housing section as follows: “Invest resources for a thorough local grievance process of any Fair Housing complaints.” Ms. Dhingra seconded. Motion passed.

Ms. Lefkowitz moved to accept the REJTF Blueprint document as amended. Ms. Ludlow seconded. Motion passed.

III. To hear, consider and act on next steps for presentation to the BOS of the Racial Equity and Justice Blueprint for the Town of Fairfield.

Ms. Lefkowitz moved to table any next steps until a date uncertain. Mr. Bogan seconded. Motion passed.

Noted: The blueprint will be presented to the BOS on January 31, 2022.

Thanks were offered to Nancy and Gina as our co-chairs and the full Task Force for their efforts on behalf of the Town.

IV. General updates: None noted.

V. Ms. Lefkowitz moved to adjourn. Ms. Ludlow seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm. Recording stopped.