

Minutes
Town of Farmington, CT
Racial Equality Taskforce
Town Hall - Council Chambers/Online Webinar
August 19, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Attendees

Joseph Capodiferro
Edward Giannaros
Kay Higgins
Bill Beckert
Sarah Smith
Yahmina Penn
Nieka Thompson
Jeremy McLaurin
Chris Cloud
Jessica Harrison
Tanner Musznski
C.J. Thomas, Town Council Chair

Staff

Nancy Parent
Kory Vincent
Anna Savastano

A. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order by Nancy Parent at 7:02p.m.

B. Approve the Rules of Procedure of the Taskforce.

Nancy Parent reviewed the Rules of Procedure for the Taskforce. The group had general discussion on the Rules of Procedure. There are an even amount of voting members and the group had to decide what constituted a tiebreaker if there was a split vote. Nancy Parent suggested that a tie failed. Bill Beckert suggested that one of the three non-voting members would vote to break the tie. Non-voting members would rotate who voted in this situation.

The role of Chair of the Committee was not voted on at this meeting. The group agreed to wait to select a Chair to allow the members the opportunity to get to know one another. The Taskforce will select a Chair by the October 13, 2020 Town Council meeting.

C.J. Thomas suggested that under Section IV. "Attendance" the language be changed from "Attendance is strongly urged. Two (2) unexcused absences, **will** result in the loss of appointment." To "Attendance is strongly urged. Two (2) unexcused absences, **may** result in the loss of appointment." This change will give the Taskforce more flexibility.

Edward Giannaros made a motion to approve the Rules of Procedure with the modification that a tie vote would be a fail and that the wording in section IV. "Attendance" be modified from "will" to "may." Jeremy McLaurin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Taskforce Introduction and Review of the Charge.

As this was the first meeting of the Task Force, each member of the committee introduced themselves and shared why they were interested in joining the Task Force. Nancy Parent reviewed the entire charge of the committee and C.J. Thomas, Farmington Town Council Chair reiterated the Town Council's expectations of the Taskforce. Chris Cloud stated that he was very interested to see what systems the Town already has in place and inquired as to what the funding will be for the Taskforce, if any.

Members of the Taskforce explained that they were frustrated with the quiet acceptance of racism in Farmington, but also that they were hopeful that the Taskforce would be able to begin to address this issue.

D. Review of the six goals of the charge and immediate action items.

Nancy Parent reviewed the six goals and the potential action items prepared by Town staff. Nancy asked the group to give their feedback on the potential action items. To view the changes made to the potential action items. (See Attachment 1)

Jessica Harrison stated that the Taskforce will need more help with its relationship to the Board of Education. Bill Beckert, the Board of Education Liaison, shared that he would be happy to assist the Taskforce with this. They discussed some of the issues that they would like to see the school system address, such as diversity in curriculum, developing more minority programs and social and emotional wellness in learning. Beckert also shared that the school's number one priority now is ensuring that they are complying with all of the COVID-19 Guidelines and safely bringing students back into the classroom.

There was consensus that the group appreciated the start but needed more time to absorb the information before providing further feedback. It was the consensus of the group that they wanted to learn more about the different facets within the charge before establishing sub-committees or prioritizing action items.

E. To discuss the timeline of the goals and action items.

The Town Council has requested the Task Force provide a timeline to the Town Council at their October 13th meeting. Bill Beckert asked Town staff to create a schedule of meetings with potential topics to help assist the committee in meeting that October 13th presentation deadline.

F. To approve a Meeting Schedule (Please bring your calendars.)

The group decided that staff will send out an online survey to solicit date preferences and sub-committee group preferences. It was suggested that the group meet the following Wednesday, August 26th to begin hearing presentations from Town Staff.

G. Public Comment.

None.

H. Adjournment.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Giannaros/McLaurin) the meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Anna Savastano
Management Analyst
Clerk of the Committee

DRAFT