

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

For members of the public:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89884768074>

Telephone Call in Information:

Dial: +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 898 8476 8074

- A. Call to Order.
- B. Public Comment.
- C. A Presentation on Various Town Services.
- D. Reading of the Minutes
  - 1) September 9, 2020 (**Attachment A**)
  - 2) September 23, 2020 (**Attachment B**)
- E. Update and discussion on goals and timeline.
- F. Public Comment.
- G. Adjournment.

cc: Committee Members  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk

\*Committee members are invited to attend this meeting in person, if they feel comfortable. All social distancing guidelines will be followed. Attendees of the meeting must attend virtually.

## Agenda Item C

### A Presentation on Various Town Services.

NOTE: Kathy Blonski (Town Manager), Kathryn Krajewski (Assistant Town Manager) and Rose Ponte (Economic Development Director) will give a presentation to the Taskforce. There will be a Q&A after their presentation. Committee members should email their questions by 12:00pm the day of the meeting.

#### **Committee Charge – Farmington Village Center Committee:**

##### Objective 2:

“To analyze the current Town services in collaboration with the Town Manager to increase transparency, to address racial inequality and to develop initiatives and measurable goals.”

##### Objective 6:

“To encourage a diverse workforce by providing education and training to local businesses in the areas of racial inequalities; and to research possible incentives to increase the number of Black owned businesses in collaboration with the Economic Development Director.”

Minutes  
Town of Farmington, CT  
Racial Equality Taskforce  
Town Hall - Council Chambers/Online Webinar  
September 9, 2020  
7:00 P.M.

**Attendees**

Joseph Capodiferro  
Edward Giannaros  
Kay Higgins  
Sarah Smith  
Yahmina Penn  
Nieka Thompson  
Jeremy McLaurin  
Chris Cloud  
Jessica Harrison  
Tanner Musznski

**Staff**

Nancy Parent  
Kory Vincent  
Anna Savastano

- A. **Call to Order.**  
Nancy Parent called the meeting to order at 7:02PM.
- B. **Public Comment.**  
Jay Tulin (See Attachment 1)
- C. **Reading of the Minutes.**
- 1) **To approve the attached August 19, 2020 minutes.**  
Upon a motion made and seconded (McLaurin/Cloud) it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the August 19, 2020 minutes.
  - 2) **To approve the attached August 26, 2020 minutes.**  
Upon a motion made and seconded (Giannaros/McLaurin) it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the August 26, 2020 minutes.
- D. **Discussion of the six goals of the charge and immediate action items.**  
The group had a discussion on the goals and immediate action steps. They worked on creating an Action Plan with a timeline. This document is a working document that will be updated regularly until its submission to the Town Council. (See Attachment 2)
- E. **Discussion of the format for upcoming presentations.**  
Nancy Parent discussed the format for the upcoming presentations. She asked that group members submit their questions for the speakers ahead of time

whenever possible. Nancy briefly discussed Freedom of Information Laws and explained to the group what materials are included under that law.

**F. Adjournment.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Higgins/McLaurin) the meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Savastano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anna Savastano  
Management Analyst  
Clerk

DRAFT

Jay Tulin

As many of you may know when this task force was developed I had advocated for the charge to be broader in order to include other forms of bias in particular anti-semitism. That in no way implies that I do not support the work of this task force. My viewpoint is based on what seems like daily anti-semitic incidents and in particular the Zoom meeting hosted by Voices of Hope here in Farmington about the holocaust that was hacked with swastikas and anti-semitic words. I also have felt that there are definite similarities between the Black and Jewish communities. I discovered and wanted to make you aware that the American Jewish Committee and the National Urban League are Zooming several webinars in recognition of Black Jewish Unity Week. I have posted the itinerary on my Facebook page. I do recognize that your very important charge is in place and am looking forward to your recommendations but felt compelled to at least make the members of the task force aware that this does exist and just exemplifies the similarities that exist. Thanks for the opportunity.

ACTION PLAN

GOAL 1	CURRENT STATUS	FUTURE ACTION	ACTION STEP
To hold meetings with residents to identify issues in the community that have led to unequal treatment based on race and to engage residents through holding community forums, dialogue groups, and training workshops on implicit bias; to develop a campaign to increase public awareness of these issues.	Gather information regarding current issues and town statistics.	Coordinate the First Public Meeting/ Community Conversation. Form subcommittee by Dec. 3, 2020.	
	By October 30, 2020	Before June 30, 2021	

GOAL 2	CURRENT STATUS	FUTURE ACTION	ACTION STEP
To analyze the current Town services in collaboration with the Town Manager to increase transparency, to address racial inequality and to develop initiatives and measurable goals.	Town Manager’s Office will give a presentation to the taskforce.	Form a subcommittee(s) to meet and brainstorm with Town Manager’s Office to develop goals and action items.	-Researching ways to attract a diverse workforce -Researching additional employee training opportunities
	Scheduled	Before Dec. 31, 2020	

GOAL 3	CURRENT STATUS	FUTURE ACTION	ACTION STEP
To collaborate with and support the Farmington Valley Health District in their mission to incorporate and adopt principles of social justice into everyday public health practice.	Farmington Valley Health Department will give a presentation to the taskforce.	Begin process of declaring racism a public health crisis. Develop goals and action items based on presentation.	
	Scheduled	Before Dec. 31, 2020	

GOAL 4	CURRENT STATUS	FUTURE ACTION	ACTION STEP
To support the Board of Education in their efforts to ensure anti-racism, social justice and equity within the PreK-12 school system in collaboration with the Superintendent of Schools.	Board of Education will give a presentation to the taskforce.	Small group to meet and brainstorm with BOE to develop goals and action steps.	-Donating diverse books to schools -Actively recruit a diverse workforce -Adopting a more diverse curriculum -Requirement for all teachers to have diversity training from an outside consultant
	Scheduled		

GOAL 5	CURRENT STATUS	FUTURE ACTION	ACTION STEP
To analyze current procedures and policies of the police department in collaboration with the Chief of Police, including use of force; to increase transparency to address racial inequality and to develop initiatives and measurable goals in collaboration with the Chief of Police.	Police Chief Paul Melanson gave a presentation to the taskforce about current policies and initiatives.	PD will give a formal presentation to the Town Council and taskforce on use of force, followed by presentation to the public.	- Review Police Accountability Bill to further understand the language and impact of the bill that the Police Chief Association/Legislature is still reviewing
		Small group to meet with to go through the Police Accountability Bill	Actively recruit a more diverse staff for the police force  Community Policing/Youth Engagement
		Presentation of the current diversity training	Increase the amount of diversity training (frequency and depth of training) Examining quality of the programming
	Completed August 26, 2020	Before Dec. 31, 2020	

GOAL 6	CURRENT STATUS	FUTURE ACTION	ACTION STEP
<p>To encourage a diverse workforce by providing education and training to local businesses in the areas of racial inequalities; and to research possible incentives to increase the number of Black owned businesses in collaboration with the Economic Development Director.</p>	<p>Economic Development Director Rose Ponte will give a presentation to the taskforce.</p>	<p>Small group to meet and brainstorm with EDD to develop goals and action steps.</p>	<p>-Research resources the Town can provide to Black and Brown business owners.            -Actively pursue incentives to promote procurement opportunities for Black and Brown owned businesses.            -Encourage/Actively Recruit a diverse workforce within the business community</p>
	<p>Scheduled</p>	<p>Before Dec. 31, 2020</p>	

Minutes  
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September 23, 2020  
7:00 P.M.

**Attendees**

Joseph Capodiferro  
Edward Giannaros  
Kay Higgins  
Sarah Smith  
Yahmina Penn  
Nieka Thompson  
Jeremy McLaurin  
Chris Cloud  
Jessica Harrison  
Tanner Musznski  
Bill Beckert

**Staff**

Nancy Parent  
Kory Vincent  
Anna Savastano

**A. Call to Order.**

Nancy Parent called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

**B. Public Comment.**

None.

**C. A Presentation by the Director of Public Health, Farmington Valley Health District.**

Jennifer Kertanis gave a presentation to the Taskforce regarding Public Health. Jennifer began her presentation with a brief update on COVID-19 in Farmington Valley. She shared that Public Health is not about individual choices and health education. Most people know about the ways to be healthy, but they do not live in proper conditions that allow them to achieve their optimal health.

She shared that policies, practices, and procedures frame what our society looks like. These policies have been shaped (inadvertently or purposely) in such a way that they are racist or bias. One example is investing in suburban areas and disinvesting in urban areas. People of color are disproportionately affected.

Jennifer also explained what the Farmington Valley Health District has done in terms of public health. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health District had partnered with the Towns to create a Community Health Assessment. She plans on returning to that project as soon as possible. Her staff also goes through a training called "The Roots of Health Inequity."



After Jennifer's presentation, the taskforce members had the opportunity to ask questions to the Director. Nancy Parent asked Jennifer about the process of declaring racism a Public Health Emergency. Jennifer said she supported the Town making that declaration because it brings more awareness to the issue.

Edward Giannaros thanked Jennifer and asked what changes she has seen other towns in the Farmington Valley make to address these issues that Farmington may be able to use as a model? Jennifer explained that, in her opinion, Farmington is ahead of the other Valley towns in identifying a taskforce and beginning to address racism as an issue. Simsbury is starting to as well. Other towns are implementing quality of life conditions to support public health, but haven't framed their efforts in the context of identifying the policies that may be negatively affecting certain groups and analyzing these policies to recognize potential biases.

C.J. Thomas asked if there were specific things the taskforce should be looking into from a health point of view on the issue of race. Specifically, any types of metrics that the Town can apply. Jennifer answered that metrics are tough because issues are really different community to community. The Health District needs to work directly with communities to identify issues, but there are tools that can be used to determine if new policies will inadvertently affect certain groups.

Anna Savastano asked if other Towns use "The Roots of Health Inequity" to educate their staff, Jennifer said that they did not, but she thought it would be a useful staff training.

Nancy thanked Jennifer for speaking with the group and told her that if the Health District comes across an area where they need the taskforce's support, not to hesitate to contact us.

**D. Update and discussion on goals and timeline.**

The group had a discussion on the goals and immediate action steps. They continued working on creating an Action Plan with a timeline. This document is a working document that will be updated regularly until its submission to the Town Council.

The Committee also discussed adding an additional public comment to the end of the meeting agenda to allow for residents to comment in response to what was discussed in the meeting.

Kay Higgins suggested the group begin working on a plan to address social media concerns. The group discussed the potential of creating a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to educate citizens on being culturally sensitive online.

Lastly, the group continued their discussion on the Board of Education and began formulating questions to send to the Superintendent prior to her presentation in October.

E. **Adjournment.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Beckert/McLaurin) the meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Savastano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anna Savastano  
Management Analyst  
Clerk