

Minutes
Town of Farmington, CT
Racial Equality Taskforce
Online Webinar
November 12, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Attendees

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

Staff

Nancy Parent
Kory Vincent
Anna Savastano

A. Call to Order.

Chris Cloud called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

B. Public Comment.

None.

C. Update and discussion on goals and timeline.

The Taskforce reviewed the first four goals of their Charge and made edits to the document. (Attachment 1) The majority of the discussion was centered around areas of improvement for the Farmington Public Schools. Although many of the Taskforce's recommendations require funding, the Taskforce also focused on suggestions that would potentially cost no or very little money. The Taskforce would like to encourage creative solutions to make the schools feel more welcoming to all students as well as current and potential Black and Brown educators. Some examples of suggestions are a monthly newsletter sent out to parents discussing topics of race and more diverse music choices played during recess and pick-up times. The Taskforce also discussed potential minority hiring strategies and ways they would like to work with the Schools new Equity Coordinator .

The Taskforce decided to save the final two goals for a future meeting to allow for adequate discussion time.

D. To schedule the next meeting. (Please bring your calendar.)

The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2020 at 6:30 PM over Zoom.

E. Public Comment.

Sophie Nuccio, IAR Teacher

Thanked the mothers of Black and Brown students for all the work they have done. She also shared that IAR has a website called "Equity Matters at IAR" that is constantly updated with resources.

F. **Adjournment.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Harrison/McLaurin)The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Anna Savastano
Management Analyst
Clerk

DRAFT

ACTION PLAN

GOAL 1	CURRENT STATUS	ACTION STEP
<p>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.</p>	<p>Gather information regarding current issues and town statistics.</p> <p>By 05/01/21</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To work with the Social Services Department to promote the Color of Justice program and other initiatives that promote awareness to diversity. 2. To form a subcommittee to create a website that highlights the work done on the Racial Equality Taskforce and throughout Town and to provide online resources for residents to learn about racial equity issues. 3. To create a "Social Media Etiquette" campaign to promote responsible social media use. 4. To create a subcommittee to organize and host multiple facilitated Town meetings (open to all residents) to participate in learning, sharing, and education about race and diversity matters. 5. To recommend that the Town Council commits or reprioritizes funds (if needed) to assist in the above action steps.
GOAL 2	CURRENT STATUS	ACTION STEP
<p>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.</p>	<p>Town Manager's Office will give a presentation to the taskforce.</p> <p>Complete: 10/4/20</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recommend to the Town Council that they add a strategic plan goal in regard to zero tolerance for racism in Farmington. 2. To form a subcommittee to provide a list to the Town Manager on recommend programs and services for racial bias training for employees and increasing efforts to diversify recruitment. 3. To recommend that the Town hire an Equity and Inclusion Consultant. 4. To recommend that the Town Council commits funds (if needed) to assist the Town Manager in the above action step.

GOAL 3	CURRENT STATUS	ACTION STEP
<p>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.</p>	<p>Farmington Valley Health Department will give a presentation to the taskforce.</p> <p>Complete: 9/23/20</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To review and to provide feedback of the Farmington Health District’s declaration that racism and oppression is a public health crisis. 2. To recommend to the Town Council that they declare Racism and Health Disparities as a Public Health Crisis 3. Placeholder: Additional steps from FVHD

GOAL 4	CURRENT STATUS	ACTION STEP
<p>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.</p>	<p>Board of Education will give a presentation to the taskforce.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recommend that the Town Council request that the Board of Education include their diversity plan in the report that is added to the Town Council Strategic Plan and to give updates on the plan on a yearly basis. The plan should include, but is not limited to, the recruitment strategies in regard to a diverse workplace. 2. Even though the Committee is aware that the Town Council does not direct decisions or specific budget items to the Board of Education, it is recommended that the Town Council and Board of Education commit or reprioritize funds, if needed, to assist the Board of Education in the following recommendations in priority order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Teacher diversity training from an outside consultant • That an outside consultant performs a yearly audit (PreK – 12) of the curriculum to guarantee a diverse curriculum that represents all students • Funding for annual Summer Programming (Possible AP Readiness Session in August of each year) for students in elementary school and beyond 3. To recommend that the Town Council requests that the new Diversity Consultant Staff Member be appointed as a member of the Racial Equality Taskforce and that she may be appointed to serve on specific committees as developed by the taskforce. The taskforce is enthusiastic to support this new position with the follow initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop strategies to address the achievement gap • To review teacher handbooks • To recommend more diverse materials and activities • Teacher recruitment and possible search committees

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a sense of welcome for different cultures and ethnicities through creative programs and initiatives <p>4. To recommend that the Schools increase communication and transparency to parents and the community.</p>
	Complete: 10/21/20	

GOAL 5	CURRENT STATUS	ACTION STEP
<p>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.</p>	<p>Police Chief Paul Melanson gave a presentation to the taskforce about current policies and initiatives.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> to arrange for a small working group to review Police Accountability Bill to further understand the language and impact of the bill that the Police Chief Association/Legislature is still reviewing To actively recruit a more diverse staff for the police force – (See Town Manager Goal 2) To recommend to the Town Council that a goal be added to Strategic Plan to provide an Implicit Bias Training for the Westfarms Mall Business Owners based on youth arrest statistics from the mall. To arrange for a small working group to review the quality of the diversity training programing and to make any necessary recommendations regarding the frequency and depth of the training. To foster the continued collaboration between Social Services and the Police Department with vulnerable residents and explore opportunities to formalize that relationship in accordance with the police accountability bill. To recommend that the Town Council commits or reprioritizes funds (if needed) to assist in the above action steps.
	Complete: 08/26/20	

GOAL 6	CURRENT STATUS	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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To research resources the Town can provide to Black and Brown business owners. 2. To actively pursue incentives to promote procurement opportunities for Black and Brown owned businesses. 3. To encourage/actively recruit a diverse workforce within the business community.
	<p>Complete: 10/4/20</p>	