

Town of Farmington, CT  
Racial Equality Taskforce  
Online Webinar  
April 26, 2021  
6:30 P.M.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83317393434>

Telephone Call in Information:

Dial: +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 833 1739 3434

- A. Call to Order.
- B. Public Comment.
- C. Review of Minutes.
  - 1) To approve the attached March 15, 2021 minutes. (Attachment A)
  - 2) To approve the attached March 29, 2021 minutes. (Attachment B)
- D. Simsbury SPIRIT Council Request.
- E. Town Budget Updates.
- F. Update on Priority 1/Quick Success Goals:
  - 1) Community Conversation Goal
  - 2) Webpage Goal
  - 3) Strategic Plan Goal
  - 4) Racism as a Public Health Crisis Goal
  - 5) Other Goals
- G. To review the Priority 1 Action Items and Develop Action Steps.
- H. Discussion of future meeting formats and frequency.
- I. Public Comment.
- J. Adjournment.

cc: Committee Members  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk

Minutes  
Town of Farmington, CT  
Racial Equality Taskforce  
Online Webinar  
March 15, 2021  
6:30 P.M.

**Attendees**

Joseph Capodiferro  
Edward Giannaros  
Chris Cloud  
Sarah Smith  
Yahmina Penn  
Nieka Thompson  
Jeremy McLaurin  
Jessica Harrison  
Tanner Muszynski  
Bill Beckert  
Jay Tulin  
Ruth Grobe  
Aaron Supple

**Staff**

Nancy Parent  
Kory Vincent  
Amanda Moffo

**Guest Speakers**

Tammy Exum, CT State Representative  
Derek Slap, CT State Senator  
Mike Demicco, CT State Representative

**A. Call to Order.**

Chris Cloud called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM

**B. Public Comment.**

Jay Tulin, Chair of the Farmington Human Relations Commission, thanked the Racial Equality Taskforce for the opportunity to join the meeting as co-hosts to discuss public policy as it pertains to human rights with the CT legislators.

**C. Reading of the Minutes.**

**1) To approve the attached March 1, 2021 minutes.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (McLaurin/Giannaros) the minutes were unanimously approved at 6:36 PM

**D. Presentation from the State Legislators**

Tammy Exum, CT House District 19 (Avon, Farmington, West Hartford) introduced herself to the group and presented the work she is doing to further social justice. Mike Demicco, CT House District 21 (Farmington, Unionville), introduced himself to the group as well. He and Tammy Exum are the current Deputy Majority Leaders of the House and therefore will be reviewing all bills put forward for legislation. He said there are all kinds of initiatives being proposed this year regarding equity and inclusion and he is excited to be reviewing them with Tammy.

Derek Slap, CT Senate District 5 (Bloomfield, Burlington, Farmington, West Hartford) is serving his first full term in state senate and is currently on five committees, including Finance Revenue and Bonding, Environment (Vice Chair), Government Administration and Elections, Aging, and is the Chairman of Higher Education and Employment

Advancement. He is also the current Deputy Majority Leader. He has been actively working with the election committee on making the election process fairer and more inclusive.

The three legislators spoke concurrently on several bills that could impact Farmington, including the Housing and Zoning Bill which could increase affordable housing by easing zoning regulations. Tammy and Derek spoke on education reform and a bill that mandates black and brown history as an offered elective at the high school level. Bill Beckert, Farmington Board of Education, commented that there is funding the budget for a position to help make Farmington's curriculum more inclusive. Mike Demicco spoke on environmental equity initiatives that would ensure no community share a larger burden of environmental pollution and exposure.

Nancy Parent reviewed the Taskforce's priority goals for the legislators so they could connect the work of the taskforce with their bills and initiatives. Chris cloud opened the forum to other Taskforce members for questions.

Nieka Thompson asked about any other educational inclusion bills other than the high school elective. Tammy Exum responded that there is focus right now on teacher recruitment and also suggested Farmington consider a pipeline program similar to West Hartford's partnership with CCSU. Derek Slap commented that the achievement gap has been exacerbated by the pandemic with 24% of the Hartford student body chronically absent. He believes there will be significant funding coming to CT for education and the legislature will have a large role in determining how that is applied. Ed Giannaros asked about racial equity in economic development, specifically as it pertains to recreational use of marijuana and how black and brown communities can benefit from the business opportunities that will create. Tammy responded that the bill is being looked at again and there are two versions of it. The Governor's bill does not have the equity piece that she would like to see, but Robin Porter (CT House Dem.) has a bill containing some of that language. Tammy commented that black and brown families have suffered significantly from the war on drugs and it is important to her that they be able to reap the economic benefits of this legislation.

Other bills were discussed including no-excuse absentee balloting to achieve equity in the polls, online cyber hate and harassment legislation to update CT's current laws, and the Crown Act (recently passed) which prohibits discrimination against people wearing their hair in its natural state.

Jay Tulin joined in for public comment to discuss some bills that are pertinent to both Human Relations Commission and Racial Equality Taskforce.

527– online hate and harassment

5367 – racially-motivated hate crimes

5557 – human trafficking

6303 – accessibility for persons with disabilities to state buildings

6298 – Medical diagnostic equipment (research study)

122 – hate crime unit in State Police

Mike Demicco responded that some of these initiatives are going to be introduced individually or as part of a package. Derek Slap asked for a list and said he would follow up with Jay.

**E. Update from Community Outreach Working Group**

Nancy Parent informed the group that the next community conversation webinar is scheduled for March 31, 2021, focused on health inequities with special attention to women's health since it is women's health month. Guest speakers will include head of Hartford Healthcare, OB/GYNs and other healthcare professionals. They are currently working on getting agreements from all participants. Mercy Adekola will be the moderator again and RE-Center will start with a presentation by Andrea Hawkins. Jessica Harrison commented that she is talking with a nonprofit out of Manchester that is currently working to declare racism a public health crisis. The webinar will be panel interviews.

**F. Other Updates**

Joe Capodiferro commented that taskforce still has funding from the Town Council for all efforts and initiatives that were requested. Chris Cloud confirmed that the next meeting will be 6:30 PM on March 29, 2021.

**G. Public Comment**

None.

**H. Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amanda Moffo

Minutes  
Town of Farmington, CT  
Racial Equality Taskforce  
Online Webinar  
March 29, 2021  
6:30 P.M.

**Attendees**

Joseph Capodiferro  
Edward Giannaros  
Chris Cloud  
Sarah Smith  
Yahmina Penn  
Jeremy McLaurin  
Jessica Harrison  
Tanner Muszynski

**Staff**

Nancy Parent  
Kory Vincent  
Anna Savastano

**A. Call to Order.**

Chris Cloud called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM

**B. Public Comment.**

None.

**C. Presentation from the Chief of Police, Paul Melanson, on the Police Accountability Bill.**

Paul Melanson gave an overview of the updates to the Police Accountability Bill which has now been finalized. Overall, the Chief reported that he believed this was a good bill that pushed the Police Departments in Connecticut forward, but it came with unfunded mandates that were extremely expensive to municipalities.

Chris Cloud asked the Chief if he was open to the idea of a Citizen Review Board. The Chief responded that Farmington's Town Government is set up differently and so it would be difficult to implement. Complaints from citizens are extremely low, and they are handled professionally with the Town Manager. Edward Giannaros said that he felt a Citizen Review Board to increase transparency. The group also discussed qualified immunity and the role of police officers in mental health situations.

**D. Discussion on the increase in Asian American hate in the United States**

C.J. Thomas, Town Council Chair, shared with the group that he was interested in working with the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) residents in Farmington to create a response to Asian American hate in the United States. He told the group that he had already begun conversations with some residents and asked for support from the Racial Equality Taskforce. Chris Cloud expressed interest in supporting this cause however, he felt that it is not appropriate for this group to assume they know what the AAPI experience is and how it should be addressed, however he was in support of showing solidarity with this community. Jessica Harrison suggested that the Taskforce release a statement in support. The group unanimously agreed that a letter in support of the AAPI community and denouncing the racist acts against them.

**E. Update from the Community Outreach Working Group.**

Nancy Parent gave a brief update on the next webinar scheduled for March 31 at 6:30

P.M. The Title of the webinar is “Unequal Treatment: A Conversation About Racial Disparities in Healthcare, with a Special Focus on Women’s Health” and it centers around health disparities in the United States. It will feature four speakers in the field. Nichelle Mullins, President of Charter Oak Health Center, Dr. Tara Mould, an Associate OB/GYN from Brigham & Women’s Hospital, Keren Prescott a Community Organizer and founder of Power Up CT and Dr. Camelia Lawrence, Director of Breast Surgery, Hospital of Central CT & Midstate Medical Center. The webinar is scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Mercy Adekola will return as the host of the meeting.

**F. Public Comment.**

- Jay Tulin, Farmington  
Mr. Tulin appreciated that the group would be discussing the AAPI community, and wanted to them to also considering including the Jewish community.

**G. Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Anna Savastano  
Management Analyst  
Clerk