

DIVERSITY COUNCIL
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 RYE STREET
BROAD BROOK, CT 06016

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Monday, January 24, 2022

Meeting ID: 714 897 1799

Passcode: townhall

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7148971799>

*****These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting*****

Diversity Council Members Present: Ana Rivera (Chair), Richard LeBoriosis (Vice Chair), Joseph Blackwood, Narda Nadeau, Jonny Wise, Gabriela Resto

Diversity Council Members Absent: Natasha Holmes

Liaison: Alan Baker

Recording Secretary: Sabo Maniscalco

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Rivera called the Regular Meeting to Order at 7:10 p.m.

2. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:

Monday, January 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

3. ATTENDANCE/APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES:

All members are present via Zoom except for Natasha Holmes.

4. INTRODUCTION:

Ana Rivera welcomed the members and the public to the second Diversity Meeting via zoom. She has also introduced Sabo Maniscalco as a Recording Secretary to the group.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Special Meeting Minutes, November 22, 2021

MOTION was made by (Richard LeBorinous) and **SECONDED** by (Narda Nadeau) to approve the special meeting minutes for November 22, 2021.

In Favor: All

Opposed: None

Motion: **PASSED**

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Ivelisse Correa: Hello! My name is Ivelisse. I am very happy to be here. I want to get the first special meeting minutes via e-mail. I also want to let you know that I am excited for the opportunities to help out with diversity in our community.

Ana Rivera: Welcome to our Diversity Council Meeting! You are always welcome to join our meeting. We are charged with promoting diversity in our town and look for ways to do it. We have some projects that we are working on and we will go over some of these projects now.

7. COMMUNICATIONS:

None

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Update: Witness Stone Project

Ana Rivera: Any updates on our ongoing projects that we have been working? We had a presentation on November 22, 2021 by Mr. Culliton regarding the Witness Stone Project. Do you have any updates and what is going on?

Joseph Blackwood: Honestly, I liked it even more after seeing his presentation. I am actually applying for more grants from the State to fund this project. Hopefully, I will have some updates for our next meeting. I am really excited about it.

Ana Rivera: What is the name of the grant you are applying for?

Joseph Blackwood: There were several from the State in equal opportunity area. I have applied for two grants. I will update you all on these with more information at our next meeting.

Ana Rivera: Thank you for taking the initiative! We are really appreciative. I am going to reach out to Richard LeBorinous. We were granted the East Windsor Raiders Together grant.

B. Update: East Windsor Greater Together Grant

Richard LeBorinous: We did receive the grant albeit at a much reduced level. We have applied for \$7,000.00 and we were awarded \$1,500.00. So, instead of allowing us to do a series of forums, it affords us to do one forum.

I have discussed with one person who does diversity trainings. She works with businesses mostly and does not really have a lot of experience working with the municipalities or municipal entities. So, I am hoping that we can get some additional possibilities.

Probably, Gabriella Resto being a student at the University, could reach out to some people there? If we have one or two more names that could be good. We could ask each of them for a proposal. We need to decide as soon as possible. We are down to one forum and we need to decide what our focus is going to be. In our grant application we talked about a number of topics related to diversity but I think we need to focus on a general approach and once we decide on a topic we can solicit proposals from a couple of the facilitators. I believe \$1,500.00 should be enough to retain a facilitator; and, have enough to develop some written materials.

Ana Rivera: Ivelisse posted a suggestion about the private companies and shop around, so there is a link for consultation that was uploaded in the chat.

Richard LeBorious: I will certainly pursue the contact. So, if we could get a couple of names, we will be able to solicit a proposal. We were initially asked to provide a memorandum of understanding with our fiduciary but in talking to several people including Jason Bowsza, our First Selectman. I have found out that our Diversity Council is considered to be a part of the town and that we do not need a fiduciary because the funding would come directly to the town and they would disperse it as appropriate. That is all I have for tonight's meeting. Thank you all!

I want to share my thoughts with the group regarding the presentation I was unable to attend. But I viewed the recording of it for the Witness Stone Project. That was an amazing presentation and the project is absolutely impressive. Anybody who has contacts in the school system might want to reach out to them. Or, we need to find somebody within the schools to work together including the community as well.

Joseph Blackwood: These are good suggestions. I will start making some contact since I have two kids in the middle school. And, the project is generally designed for the Middle and High School ages. So, I will start sending out some emails.

Alan Baker joined Zoom at 7:22pm

Alan Baker: I am sorry to interrupt you. And, I am sorry I am late. I had some trouble with my computer. On that topic, I did speak to one of the Board of Education members. I was under the impression that you guys would be approaching them to do a presentation to the Board of Education. So, the Superintendent of Schools could get a peek at what is going on there. I think they would be interested in it. I have also mentioned it to Jason Bowsza, our First Selectman and he thought that it was a great idea, too. So, I would love to see this thing get some legs.

Ana Rivera: Thank You! Joseph, do you think, you would be able to invite Mr. Culliton back?

Joseph Blackwood: Absolutely. I will reach out to him.

Ana Rivera: All right. Thank you so much!

Richard LeBorinous: The other thing we might do is to send that video to the Superintendent of Schools, and possibly to Mr. Masters in the Social Studies area. Also, we might share it with the Board of Education; because, just the viewing of that video is very informative.

Ana Rivera: Alan, do you think that would be just as impactful to send the video we have recorded?

Alan Baker: I would certainly send the video. I would also definitely try to get that presentation in front of the whole Board during their meeting as well. So, everybody has a chance to see and eventually discuss it altogether. However, I thought for the price of that, it was well worth of what you get out of it. I am really confident we can make it happen if we tried.

Ana Rivera: That was, indeed, a good one. I loved that project. Do we have anything else to add to this project?

No. Okay. We will move along.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Black History Month

Ana Rivera: I have received email from Gabriella and she has some suggestions regarding the things that we could do for the Black History Month. I think it is important for us to be aware of timeline to this event. So far, we only had one meeting since our inception; therefore, we should look at the year as a whole and see what we might want to do so we can get it done right with adequate amount time.

Gabriella Resto: Yes. So, basically, I have thought of two ideas considering the short notice. I figured it would be just feasible for us to start small this year. And, then once we have more time to establish the calendar of months honoring certain communities, then we can plan for the next year and be better prepared. But at least for this year I thought of the ideas that are definitely attainable for us.

So, the first one is that we could collaborate with the Warehouse Point Library and see if we could help them set up a stand highlighting different books by Black African-American authors and different pieces of literature that really highlight the black and African-American community. Additionally, they promote that on social

media because I know they promote a lot of their events through either Face Book or via email or on their page.

The second one I thought of is that we could also do it via social media and send out just like an update or post something about asking the community members to send us information about any businesses that they know that are owned by any black or African-American community members. Then, we could reach out to them and either do like a little write up and just highlight them on social media to honor that and spread awareness of their businesses and really just establish that sense of community in town. Does anyone have any ideas, comments or feedback?

Ana Rivera: I think those two ideas are great. Regarding the Face Book, do we just post on usual boards like the Town Bulletin?

Gabriella Resto: Yes. That is what I am thinking. I mean I do not really use Face Book that much but my mom uses it. So, I am pretty sure that it is the same group she uses to get all Town information. So, I can use my resources through my mother and go back and check that out and see what she says. I believe that it is the Town Bulletin of East Windsor. There are a couple of them out there.

Ivellise Correa: There is also Enfield group on Face Book.

Ana Rivera: I love the idea of the Black History month literature and I think it is fantastic. We will have the library post it on Face Book, which would be great. Did you want to reach out to the Journal Inquirer?

Gabriella Resto: I think that would be great if we are able to get any submissions of Black-owned businesses in town. I think we could forward it their way and if it is easier for them to conduct like a short little interview or just like a write up about the companies. I think it is their expertise so may be that would work for them. I have done a lot of community service with them in the past like in high school and I know my brother still keeps in touch with a lot of them.

Ana Rivera: Okay. Great! Regarding reaching out to the Journal, did you want me to do that or you would you?

Gabriella Resto: Do you still have connections there, anyone in the Journal?

Ana Rivera: The one connection that I had has moved on.

Gabriella Resto: In that case, I will talk to them.

Ana Rivera: Thank you for doing that! Does anyone have anything else to add for the Black History month and those holidays going forward?

Ivelisse Correa: Are you guys interested in any outlets like the Hartford Current, Fox, NBC or anyone else?

Gabriella Resto: I think just for the time's sake and because we only have a couple of weeks to plan it at this point.

Ivelisse Correa: I can get to them within a short time frame like a day.

Gabriella Resto: Okay. I would put it up to the members of the Council to decide. What are your thoughts?

Ana Rivera: I think that reaching out to the media would be great for our forum.

Ivelisse Correa: I can provide the contact information or I can contact on your behalf.

Ana Rivera: Okay. Thank you for offering the resource!

Richard LeBoriosis: I think before anybody tries to generate press we have to be sure of what we are doing decisively. We also have to first gain the cooperation of library. Secondly, I would suggest Jason Bowsza, our First Selectman who may have any information on African-American businesses. He is a good resource.

Ana Rivera: A great network.

Richard LeBoriosis: James Richard from the Chamber of Commerce might be a good contact for that, too.

Ana Rivera: We will save the media once we have everything in place, nice and solid and then decide if that is going to be something that is going to help us get the word out and how far-reaching, we want to be. So, that is the Black History Month and holidays. Does anyone else have anything else to add?

Narda Nadeau: We have talked about the Pan-African flag being flown for three months.

Ana Rivera: Yes, it is next on the agenda.

B Diversity Flags

Ana Rivera: So, I just called it Diversity flags because of their all-encompassing theme. I have received a text from Narda Nadeau. She was inquiring about flying

flags and she wanted to talk about it. I just do not know how we go about doing that; or, whom we would contact. Did you look into that?

Narda Nadeau: No, but I think it would have to go through the Selectmen.

Ana Rivera: What is your perspective? Can you share it with us?

Narda Nadeau: Just like for Black History Month showing pride in Black African-American community, I thought it would be as important to fly pride flag flown.

Ana Rivera: Okay. That is definitely something. You have to start with Jason Bowsza, our First Selectman. Did you reach out to him and take that on as a project?

Narda Nadeau: Yes, I will do that.

Ana Rivera: Okay. Great. Thank you! Does anybody have any questions or comments?

Ivelisse Correa: Just to add to Narda's suggestion regarding the Pan-African flag and that it would be mostly because of the Black History Month. It is celebrating the achievements of the African-Americans here on the mainland who via slavery, their identities were erased. So, they do not have a culture to go back to over there. So, this would be more connecting with the achievements of you know like George Washington, Carver, Martin Luther King, and Garret Morgan. So, that is symbolism behind the flag where we can all unify together and these are the achievements that you know we created here. So, I think that just to clarify what Narda has said because I believe she might have mentioned something before.

Ana Rivera: As a council is this something that we want to move forward with? Any objections? None. Okay Thank you for that Narda!

10. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Ana Rivera: That is the end of our agenda. . So, before we adjourn, does anyone have anything to add? We can just have an open forum now.

Gabriealla Resto: I do have one thing and I have tried to share it in our text group but it is not working. So, over the weekend, I have received information about a webinar even that is hosted by the Governor's Council on Women and Girls. It is titled Latinas in Leadership. It is a panel discussion and the moderators include the Lieutenant Governor and the Commissioner of the State Department of Housing and including other different panelists. So, I will email the flyer to everyone. Feel free to register for the event. Feel free to share with the others. I am registering for it. If no one attends, I

will definitely report it to the group. I think it would be a great event to attend led by the government initiative.

Ana Rivera: Thank you! Include Sabo our Recording Secretary in your mail.

Gabriella Resto: Yes. Definitely.

Ana Rivera: Thank you!

11. **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

Regular Monthly Meeting, February 28, 2022

12. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION was made by (Richard LeBorious) and **SECONDED** by (Joseph Blackwood) to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

In Favor: All

Opposed: None

Motion: **PASSED**

Respectfully Submitted,

Sabo Maniscalco, Recording Secretary, Diversity Council