EQUITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes for Meeting

September 28, 2020

Members in Attendance:
Others in attendance: Select Board Chair Melinda Collins
Members Absent: None
Meeting Location: Via Zoom
Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 PM

The agenda included the following:
  • Introduction of Clerk/Note-taker-Mary Ellen Welch
  • Open Meeting Regulations
  • Committee Priorities

A number of members noted that the demographic makeup of Town Government does not represent the demographics of the Town and agreed that more people should be encouraged to run for elected positions. It was suggested that residents might need to be educated re: opportunities that are available such for town meeting members, school committee, etc.

Members want to look at town departments hiring policies and practices to see what is currently being done to increase diversity. Diversity in the Police and Fire departments were especially noted as potential topics for the Committee. A number of members want to understand what types of training is currently available within the Police Department to ensure equity in policing. A member mentioned that some thought should be given to how Civil Service hiring rules impact diversity for these departments

The group also noted that town boards and Committees and non-elected offices are also not very diverse and wondered what could be done to broaden the pool of people of color for these opportunities. The Committee wants to understand what the process and selection criteria that is in place to ensure diversity in Town appointed positions.
Since many of these positions are appointed by the Town Moderator, Committee members wanted to know what kind of outreach is done to bring candidates to the attention of the Moderator. The group agreed that the Moderator should be contacted as part of the research on this topic.

Members also wanted to find out what the Town policies/practices are regarding contracts with vendors of color and women owned businesses.

Affordable housing was discussed as a potential priority for the Committee. Real estate “red lining” was also mentioned as a possible area for research.

A Committee member suggested that a focus on youth and families should be a priority. The member noted that there was a lack of places such as a YMCA for children in Milton.

Other members talked about school diversity noting that children sometimes don’t see a Black teacher until High School. The Committee member said that staff diversity is important especially when trying to teach kids about anti-racism.

Members agreed that it was important to find out what efforts and activities are currently underway within Town departments and with other groups that have been working with various Town departments over the years, so that the Committee can build on work that is or has been done. The Committee discussed the need to do some research and to get baseline demographic data and data on best practices from other communities, locally and nationally. It was also suggested that the Committee should put in place a scorecard to track Town’s progress against its diversity goals.

A member brought up the idea of instituting a Town-wide complaint process as some other neighboring communities have.
Melinda Collins, Select Board Chair, joined the meeting to educate Committee and its Members on the rules and regulations of the Open Meeting Law. Questions re: whether the Town had instances of open meeting violations and if subcommittees are subject to the open meeting laws will be followed up on at the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned:
7:03PM

Respectfully Submitted By:
Mary Ellen C. Welch, Clerk