



LEBANON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 20, 2024 - 6:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE

1. Call to Order

- A. The February 20, 2024, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission (DEI) Meeting is hereby called to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

- A. December 19, 2023

3. Old Business: None

4. New Business

- A. Discuss Updates/Additions to Strategic Plan
B. Update from Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF), Discuss Definition of Environmental Justice
C. Elect a New DEI Commission Chair
D. Equity Plan Subgroup – Document Summarizing Two Stakeholder Brainstorming Sessions to DEI Commission for Review

5. Open to the Public

- A. Any member of the public who desires to speak on any item may do so when the item is taken up by the Commission and will be allowed to speak on the subject for not more than three minutes. (Note: Speakers are asked to state their name, ward of residence, and to use the microphone provided.)

6. Future Agenda Items

7. Other Business

8. Adjournment

Meetings are open for in-person and remote attendance. Members of the public that wish to attend remotely may do so by going to LebanonNH.gov/Live where you will find instructions on how to enter the meeting. Members of the public will be able to participate and ask questions through the City's virtual platform or by phone. Please note: Should technical difficulties occur during the meeting that disrupts virtual or phone connection(s), the meeting will continue without remote access capabilities.

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CITY OF LEBANON
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMISSION
December 19, 2023— 6:00pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL or
Remote Via Microsoft Teams: LebanonNH.gov/LIVE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Ford Burley (Secretary); Karen Liot Hill (City Council Representative); Keiselim Montas (Public Representative); Kathy McCarty (Public Representative) (via telepresence); Bise Wood Saint Eugene (Vice-Chair); Emily Walton (Chair); Devin Wilkie (City Council Representative) (via telepresence); Tia Winter (Public Representative)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alisha Robinson (Public Representative); Karen Zook (City Council Alternate); Simone Whitecloud (Public Representative Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: Shaun Mulholland (City Manager)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The December 19, 2023, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission (DEI) Meeting was called to order by Chair Emily Walton at 6:00pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the November 21, 2023 DEI Commission Meeting were approved.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Strategic Plan Update and Review

City Manager Shaun Mulholland presented the current state of the main elements of the Strategic Plan, requesting feedback from the Commission at the January meeting.

B. Environmental Justice Task Force Status Update

Richard Ford Burley and Councilor Devin Wilkie updated the Commission on the current progress of the Environmental Justice Task Force.

C. Citywide Equity Plan – Discuss Next Steps

Councilor Devin Wilkie reported that City Staff’s REAL (Race Equity And Leadership) team was asked to brainstorm using the same questions as used in the Commission’s previous stakeholder brainstorming session, and recommended taking the results of both sessions to create something more substantial. Councilor Karen Liot Hill reported back with highlights from the second stakeholder brainstorming session.

Councilors Wilkie and Liot Hill will work together to create a document to bring to the Commission’s February meeting to return to the stakeholders for feedback at a further community conversation, at which time the Commission will plan another outreach event.

D. Vote on new DEI Commission Chair

Chair Emily Walton announced her intention to step back from the Chair position, necessitating a new Chair. Councilor Karen Liot Hill praised Chair Walton for her service in the position to date. A brief discussion ensued on potential candidates, with the vote being postponed until January.

E. Goal-Setting for New Year

Chair Emily Walton presented the goals for 2023 set by the Commission in the previous year. Discussion ensued over how many have been addressed, with general assent that the Commission had met the majority of its goals, while acknowledging that the work towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is never “complete.”

Given recent comments at a City Council meeting regarding the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, discussion briefly centered around freedom of expression and the DEI Commission’s place in the conversation. The potential for Commission input to the Council regarding a potential Council agenda item was discussed, with Councilor Devin Wilkie agreeing to inform Chair Emily Walton if an Agenda Item is necessary for the January Commission meeting.

Discussion then centered around listening sessions in the past and future, and whether/how to create a list of people and organizations to reach out to, or for people or organizations to add themselves to.

Further discussion focused on community events: Pride, Juneteenth, the Frederick Douglass reading, the Multicultural Festival, and the Multicultural Potluck. Tia Winter reported on the successes of the latter, with plans to repeat the event again in 2024.

Finally, new goals were added to the list, in addition to the current goals regarding the Citywide Equity Plan and Environmental Justice. Vice-Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene suggested an international food and music festival, with City Manager Shaun Mulholland suggesting partnering with another established event, for example adding international food vendors to the Lebanon Opera House’s NEXUS festival or the Rotary’s Brewfest. Other suggestions were made for further agenda items.

72 **5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

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74 No discussion.
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77 **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
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80 **7. OTHER BUSINESS**
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83 **8. ADJOURNMENT**
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85 Chair Emily Walton adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm.
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88 Respectfully submitted,
89 Richard Ford Burley, DEI Commission Secretary

DEI Commission

First Equity Plan Report

Based on the DEI Commission's 7/26/2023 brainstorming session with invited community stakeholders and its 12/5/2023 meeting with the City REAL team, the following report summarizes the key priority areas and recommendations for the focus of a Citywide Equity Plan:

Priorities:

Access to Public Services and Amenities

- Improve **bus routes**, schedules, hours of operation, and overall accessibility of public transportation and bicycle/pedestrian paths
- Address challenges with **waste disposal access** and options like composting and recycling
- Expand **internet/telecom access**, especially for unhoused and disadvantaged residents
- Increase access to medical, dental, and mental **healthcare**, especially for low-income individuals
- Improve communication and publicizing of **cultural events** and local resources
- Enhance **linguistic access** through translated materials and interpretation services
- Streamline processes for **accessing city services** and public spaces for all community members
- Facilitate communication and **coordination between school districts and municipalities** in both states
- Access to **information** – no access to technology – digital equity – digital divide
- Continue to offer **affordable programming**

Economic Equity

- Address disparities in **cost-of-living increases** compared to pay raises across the region
- Review impacts of **benefits cut-offs** tied to pay raises
- Diversify **suppliers** and connect with minority-owned businesses
- Offer **grants, loans, and accelerator programs** to support **BIPOC-owned businesses**
- **Recruit for diversity** within major employers and leadership boards, including disabled and disadvantaged populations
- Increase opportunities for **networking** and accessing services outside standard work hours
- **Increased education** in community (businesses) and within City Departments

Housing & Childcare Access and Affordability

- Increase **affordable housing** and address barriers to home ownership
- Offer **accessible childcare** options and resources

- Address **energy costs** and energy insecurity

Community Connectedness and Inclusion

- Host and support **cross-cultural community events** and immersive cultural experiences
- Increase activities and **representation for people** across age demographics, including young people, single adults, and older people
- Celebrate **language diversity** through translated materials, signs, etc.
- Increase DEI education and **cultural competence training** for all communities
- Ensure **community spaces** and social opportunities are inclusive and accessible
- **Foster connections** across cultures and backgrounds to ensure all community members, including newcomers, nonresidents, and those engaged in homeschooling, feel **welcomed, represented, and able to access social networks**

City Employees

- Steer away from thinking of **employment candidates** as “good fits”
- Consider **customer population**, and customer DEI policies, in procurement and contracting purposes
- Address **state-level policies** that drive some of these barriers to diversity, including testing requirements and certifying standards
- Ensure **pay equity** across departments and roles
- Evaluate **interviewing practices**, ensuring a diverse group of people on hiring panels

Goals & Metrics:

- Community-wide **culturally competent language & bias education**
- All people **feel safe, welcome, included**; **no intrinsic assumption** someone is not local
- Decreased **systemic barriers**, including in municipal and organizational leadership
- Increased **community connectivity & engagement**
- Decreased **poverty rates**, decreased crime
- Ongoing opportunities for **whole communities**, including immersive trips
- Culture in schools: Positive **student behavior** and community cohesiveness
- Formation of **ongoing norms** in communities with minimal resistance
- Increase **diversity within City Departments & community**: youth staying in the community, different languages represented, female leadership & employee retention
- Percentage of **affordable housing units** embedded in all new development – not separated
- **Workplace equity**:
 - Work schedules (flexibility)
 - Increased efforts in childcare assistance
 - Educational opportunities for all (succession planning) – increase availability and mentorship
- What is being **celebrated** within the community

- More **applications** than openings on boards and committees
- Decrease in complaints in **access issues**
- More City **employees live in the City**

Process Improvement

- Seek to **include all members of the community** who should be involved in equity conversations
 - Representation on Boards and Committees – how are we reaching out to people who are not represented? Socioeconomic status – voice needs to be broadly represented (not only homeowners, but renters, better representation of different ages, etc.)
 - Increased education on what it means to serve on Boards and Committees – impact it can have on community
 - Investing in people – active outreach
 - More youth representation on committees
 - Stipends for those serving on boards and committees – difficulty serving due to childcare issues
 - “Working Groups” for boards and committees
 - Rethinking how work on boards and committees is done
- Expand **reach of the conversation** to the broader community, including underrepresented groups, using available resources to encourage wider involvement
- Remove **barriers to participation** to ensure community members can easily participate
- Engage in **active outreach** and ask intentional questions of participating members: who is equity for, and what is our position in pursuing equity?
- Motivate the dominant cultures to participate in **planning and pursuing equity goals**
- Examine opportunities to **use policy to aid and support** all community members
- Think beyond “welcoming” to include actions alongside statements.
- Routine, long-term planning and assessment

Accountability

- Track **data on poverty rates, pay equity, business ownership** demographics
- Conduct **inclusive community surveys** to measure change
- Maintain focus through **ongoing planning, assessment, and progress tracking**
- **Report progress** to community stakeholders and keep plan visible