

FINAL

CITY OF LEBANON
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMISSION
February 20, 2024— 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); Alisha Robinson (Chair); Bise Wood Saint Eugene (Vice-Chair); Devin Wilkie (City Council Representative); Tia Winter (Public Representative)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kathy McCarty (Public Representative); Keiselim Montas (Public Representative); Emily Walton (Public Representative); Simone Whitecloud (Public Representative Alternate); Karen Zook (City Council Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: David Brooks (Deputy City Manager)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The February 20, 2024 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission (DEI) Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene at 6:00pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the December 19, 2023 DEI Commission Meeting were approved.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss Updates/Additions to the Strategic Plan

The members present proposed and discussed various changes to the Social Health and Justice section of the City's Strategic Plan, including a timeline for the completion of the proposed Citywide Equity Plan (KPI 9.1.1), the potential addition of an annual equity audit process, and the production of a City Welcome Packet for new residents providing lists of resources and features of the City. Because of the Equity Plan completion schedule, Alisha Robinson proposed an extension of the usual DEI Commission meeting time from 60 minutes to 90 minutes for the March and April meetings, with a proposed start time of 5:30pm. This was agreed on by the members present and steps will be taken to determine if the changes work with the absent members.

B. Environmental Justice Task Force Status Update

Richard Ford Burley gave a brief update of the progress of the Environmental Justice Task Force. The Task Force is currently in “fact finding” mode. Last month, members met with staff members from the City’s Human Services Department, this month it will be meeting with members of the City’s Planning Department.

C. Elect a New DEI Commission Chair

A MOTION by Richard Ford Burley to nominate Alisha Robinson for Chair of the Lebanon DEI Commission. Tia Winter seconds The Motion.

There was brief discussion, in which Alisha Robinson accepted the nomination, and no others were put forward for the position.

****The Motion was approved unanimously.***

D. Equity Plan Subgroup – Document Summarizing Two Stakeholder Brainstorming Sessions to DEI Commission for Review

Councilor Devin Wilkie briefly presented the document generated by the Equity Plan Subgroup (consisting of Councilor Devin Wilkie, Chair Alisha Robinson, and Councilor Karen Liot Hill) from the notes of the external and internal community stakeholder brainstorming sessions on July 26, 2023 and December 5, 2023 respectively. The document will form the basis of the draft proposal that the Commission will produce by the end of the May 21, 2024 DEI Commission meeting. As per the discussion of the timeline earlier in the meeting, this will allow for a public comment period throughout the summer, ending at the end of August, with a completed revised draft to be discussed and potentially sent to the City Council at the September 17, 2024 meeting of the DEI Commission.

E. Access Navigators

Richard Ford Burley discussed the program, explaining that they are in talks to work with Access Navigators to produce a publicly-viewable accessibility map of local businesses and facilities. Richard Ford Burley will meet with a representative shortly to get more details, also investigating the possibility of including gender neutral facilities and baby changing tables as well.

F. Cease-fire Resolution

Councilor Devin Wilkie reports that a draft Gaza ceasefire resolution will be brought before the City Council at their February 21, 2024 meeting. Councilor Wilkie and Councilor Karen Liot Hill discussed the potential for the draft resolution to be brought before the DEI Commission for advice and recommendations. An item will be added to the March meeting of the DEI Commission to that effect.

5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Jennifer Tilton, Ward 1 (attending via telepresence), approached the Commission with disturbing reports of her daughter being the subject of racially-motivated bullying and harassment at the Lebanon Middle School, as well as the challenges and frustrations she had experienced trying to work with various LMS staff members. At the suggestion of Councilor Karen Liot Hill, the DEI Commission will write a letter to the District Superintendent informing her of the incidents and the great concern that the members of the Commission feel about the situation and the way it is being handled. Tia Winter advised Ms. Tilton on several options she could pursue and gave her several potential contacts to reach out to, and further affirmed how seriously she and the rest of the Commission members take these kinds of issues. Vice Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene suggested that a further step might be to have all new hires to the District be given a copy of the Welcoming Lebanon Ordinance.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Various other business items were briefly discussed: Councilor Karen Liot Hill, having recently attended the first planning session for the White River Junction Pride celebrations this year, reported that there will be a week's worth of activities in the last week of July, and suggested the DEI Commission take part in some fashion; Vice Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene asked for assistance with the creation of a multicultural food event to potentially align with the NEXUS festival, and Chair Alisha Robinson offered to provide useful contacts for him to reach out to; and Councilor Devin Wilkie asked for input regarding the plan for public art in the tunnel connecting the Mascoma River Greenway and the Northern Rail Trail.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Alisha Robinson adjourned the meeting at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Ford Burley, DEI Commission Secretary