

FINAL

CITY OF LEBANON
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMISSION
March 19, 2024— 6:00pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL or
Remote Via Microsoft Teams: LebanonNH.gov/LIVE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Liot Hill (City Council Representative); Keiselim Montas (Public Representative); Alisha Robinson (Chair) (via telepresence); Emily Walton (Public Representative); Bise Wood Saint Eugene (Vice-Chair); Simone Whitecloud (Public Representative Alternate) (via telepresence); Devin Wilkie (City Council Representative); Tia Winter (Public Representative)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Richard Ford Burley (Secretary); Kathy McCarty (Public Representative); Karen Zook (City Council Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: Shaun Mulholland (City Manager)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The March 19, 2024 meeting of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission (DEI) Meeting was called to order by Chair Alisha Robinson at 6:00pm.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the meetings on February 20, 2024 and March 5, 2024 were approved.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Ceasefire Resolution

Chair Alisha Robinson asked whether members of the public in attendance had had an opportunity to read the amended resolution as included in the published packet for the present meeting, and a paper draft was shared.

Councilor Devin Wilkie gave a brief overview of the differences between the original resolution and the draft under consideration. Tia Winter offered thoughts on whether it was the purview of the City Council to make a recommendation on this issue. Councilor Karen Liot Hill said that any reference to matters outside of the City of Lebanon was beyond the purview of the City Council and the DEI Commission, and indicated that she would be arguing such should it come before the City Council. Emily Walton argued that it would serve as a symbolic gesture and a

compliment to the resolution already passed by the Council in a way that incorporated the feedback and concerns that the DEI Commission received. A conversation was held about the relationship between the present draft and public feedback, with members alternately voicing concerns over whether enough public comment had been taken or if further public comment was necessary. Keiselim Montas suggested it was appropriate to forward the draft resolution to Council in order for them to decide what to do with it. Bise Wood Saint Eugene suggested it was appropriate to make international calls for peace, even if other international calls might be inappropriate. Councilor Karen Liot Hill spoke in favor of public comment once more before the DEI Commission votes, after which public comment was opened.

Richard Abel, resident of Lebanon Ward 1, offered recommendations for changes to the resolution, especially a call to protect anti-Zionism, and to delete any reference to military aid. Other comments were submitted on paper, which have been appended to these minutes.

Ben Spero, resident of Lebanon Ward 1, offered critiques of the draft, but focused more on his belief that there should not be a resolution at all.

Laila Volle, resident of Lebanon Ward 2, requested a vote on the resolution as soon as possible and voiced concerns about the potential for taking language about military aid out, as that is a large part of the reason for the resolution.

Maria Solis Kennedy, resident of Lebanon Ward 2, urged approval of the present draft as a compromise.

Sabiya Ahamed, resident of Lebanon Ward 2, argued against adding anti-Zionism, as a political position, not a race, religion, or ethnicity.

Ellen Rockmore, resident of Hanover, argued against the resolution, especially the language around prisoners and military aid.

Jeremy Katz, resident of Lebanon Ward 3, praised the changes from the initial resolution to the present draft, and agreed with other commenters about adding anti-Zionism to the language.

Aleks Austin, resident of Lebanon Ward 2, argued against sending military aid to conflict zones in general, and referenced the Council's vote on climate change in an explanation of the interconnectedness of local communities with international matters.

Daisy Goodman, resident of Lyme, employee of Dartmouth Health, thanked the Commission for creating a compromise document, and spoke against adding Zionism as a protected class.

Dr. Ahalem Abuawad, resident of Lebanon Ward 2, thanked the Commission for listening, asked that the resolution mention not using Lebanon tax dollars for military aid.

Dr. Graham Edwards, resident of Lebanon Ward 2, spoke against the use of tax dollars for military aid, and against the inclusion of anti-Zionism in the resolution.

Christina Wolf, resident of Lyme, works in Lebanon, speaking as a member of Veterans for Peace, called for an end to war, and that a call for a cease fire is a just thing to do.

Councilor Karen Liot Hill argued that taxes collected by the federal government are not Lebanon taxpayer dollars but federal taxpayer dollars, and reiterated her belief that the City of Lebanon weighing in on foreign policy is radical and inappropriate.

With the closing of public comment, Emily Walton thanked everyone for their comments, and suggested the words “and hostages” be added to the term “prisoners.”

City Manager Shaun Mulholland advised removing any reference to the Mayor, for reasons having to do with the structure of the city government, and advised rewording the initial paragraph to align with the Welcoming Lebanon Ordinance, which changes were agreed to by general assent.

A MOTION by Chair Alisha Robinson that the DEI Commission pass the City of Lebanon Resolution in Support of Peace in Gaza and Israel that was drafted by the DEI Commission to the City Council with a recommendation to forward it to our state officials, as amended.

Seconded by Emily Walton.

Discussion of the Motion began.

A MOTION by Councilor Karen Liot Hill to amend paragraphs 4 and 8 to add “anti-Zionism.”

****The amendment died for lack of a second.***

Discussion of the Motion ended.

****The Motion is approved 7-1 by roll-call vote.***

4. NEW BUSINESS

All new business was postponed due to lack of time.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Alisha Robinson adjourned the meeting at 7:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Ford Burley, DEI Commission Secretary