

Minutes for Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations
Town of Winthrop
In-person Meeting in Harvey room: Wednesday, July 14, 2021

Attendees: Andrea Baez (chair); Walter Connelly (secr); John Bentley; Suzanne Martucci-Gallo; John Morgan; Anthony Williams (arrived late). Also present to speak: Terry Delehanty (Police Chief/ acting Town Manager); Lisa Howard (School Dept); Meredith Hurley (Public Health).

1. Roll call

2. Chief Delehanty rehearsed the details of June 26, 2021. It was quickly apparent that Nathan Allen murdered Ramona Copper and David Green out of racial hatred since he had bypassed 6 white people before killing them. Allen's personal writings and drawings confirmed his hatred of both Blacks and Jews. In consultation with the D.A., news of the double murder as a racially motivated hate crime was released to public promptly. Efforts quickly shifted to mental health follow-up care in coordination with Dept Heads, especially School Dept and Public Health.

3. Lisa Howard related how the School Dept's preparation for school shootings and COVID response laid the groundwork for the School's immediate response to June 26 murders. They were able to shift gears to identify and connect with youth potentially impacted by the events. They assembled resources and called in specialized support.

On the matter "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion" Lisa Howard proposed as a focus the slogan/adage "Going slow to go fast." By this, she explained that School Dept has been slowing laying a solid foundation for DEI work so that efforts will have lasting impacts. This involves annual review of the curriculum, working groups with parents, and professional outside consultation (e.g., Equity Coaches)

The DEI website unfortunately diverged from this intentional process and was released prematurely. The outside consultants advised that the School Dept to pause the website until it was more fully vetted. It was NOT pulled due to any political pressure within the town. Nor will it be relaunched due to political pressure. The DEI website will be offered as a resource to parents, and it is not required by any state or town ordinance. Moreover, it is work of volunteers. Commission members asked that the CDIHR be involved as an extra set of eyes to avoid further concerns. Commission also requested of Lisa Howard that the School Dept appoint a liaison to the Commission to better facilitate the flow of info and dialogue. Lisa Howard agreed, and had someone in mind already.

4. Meredith Hurley also relayed the response of the Public Health Dept to the hate crimes of June 26, from immediate canvassing of the neighborhood to developing a list for follow-up care. Meredith Hurley also informed the Commission of a grant focusing on Equitable Approaches to Public Health to build on the cross training of public safety (police/fire) and public health.

5. Commission Chair, Andrea Baez updated us on "Let's Talk Winthrop". The event is made possible through a grant of the Cultural Council, and will be jointly sponsored by One Winthrop, Winthrop Police Dept and the CDIHR. The two night training via Zoom is to foster meaningful and difficult conversations across difference.

Commissioner Johnny Bentley asked Chief Delehanty if there was any connection between the June 26 event and a similar incident 1.5 yrs ago when another White Supremacists was apprehended at the beach. Apparent from the hate, the FBI had made no connections between the two events.

Chief Delehanty also raised the issue of an assigned Clerk for the Commission and town emails.