



Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice and Belonging (DEIJB) Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2023

City Council Chambers

12:00 PM

1. Mayor Bouley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.
2. Roll Call. Committee Members Present: Mayor Jim Bouley, Councilor Byron Champlin, and Councilor Zandra Rice Hawkins.
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes.
 - April 14, 2023
 - May 2, 2023
 - May 4, 2023
 - May 6, 2023

Action: Councilor Champlin moved to amend the April 14, 2023 meeting minutes to include Charm Emiko's last name. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes. Councilor Champlin moved to approve the April 14, 2023 as amended, as well as the May 2, 2023, the May 4, 2023, and the May 6, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

4. Meeting overview by Committee Chair, Mayor Bouley.
5. Committee discussion.

Action: Mayor Bouley welcomed committee members. Councilor Champlin noted for the record that the FY2024 budget meeting schedule as well as committee members' vacation schedules delayed this committee getting together following the listening sessions held in early May.

Mayor Bouley indicated that he felt it would be worthwhile for committee members to have a conversation about the listening sessions held in May. He further stated he felt committee members should have a general discussion about the action Council took in appropriating the \$140,000 towards DEIJB efforts to be held during FY2024. Mayor Bouley also stated he felt the committee should discuss the recent incident at the Teatotaller's on Main Street.

Mayor Bouley thanked Councilor Rice Hawkins for moderating the DEIJB listening sessions held in early May. Mayor Bouley indicated that some of his takeaways from the listening sessions were the importance of economic diversity as well as the need to assist and/or educate those that wished to start businesses in the area as to what services currently exist to help them in their endeavors.

Mayor Bouley further stated he felt that the committee should do an assessment as to what the goals of the committee are and what the committee would like to accomplish on a short term, intermediate, and long-term basis. He further stated he'd like the committee to discuss whether or not a consultant should be hired to help the City with their DEIJB efforts.

Councilor Champlin indicated he appreciated hearing all of the personal stories from those that spoke at the DEIJB listening sessions. Councilor Champlin noted that members of the Concord community have experienced exclusion and harassment and, in many cases, feel as though they are not equal citizens and/or participants within the community. Councilor Champlin indicated those issues should be addressed on a long-term basis. He further stated that when DEIJB issues are discussed he hopes that a broad look is taken to include those from the BIPOC Community, the New American Community, the disability community, and the LGBTQ community. Councilor Champlin stated that the committee should put together a process that will take a detailed look at systemic barriers that members of this committee and/or members of City Council may not even be aware of.

Councilor Rice Hawkins indicated she shared a lot of the same observations as Mayor Bouley and Councilor Champlin. She stated she would like committee members to spend some time reviewing the minutes from the listening sessions with a goal of identifying things and/or policy steps that could be implemented within the City. Councilor Rice Hawkins indicated she felt an immediate step could be assisting organizations in honoring their celebrations with Flags on Main Street. She also stated that consideration could be given to improving the City's website communications as well as improving Council and committee agenda systems making them more accessible and/or readable for those citizens that have English as a second language, and/or those citizens with digital or hearing impairments.

In response to Councilor Rice Hawkins comments about assisting organizations with flags on Main Street, Councilor Champlin indicated that while he fully supported celebrating private observances he was aware of a City of Boston Massachusetts lawsuit where the City of Boston was sued, and lost when someone complained the City was picking and choosing which flags they thought were appropriate to display within their community. Councilor Champlin further noted that the City Solicitor should be involved in drafting any Flags on Main Street policy to ensure that the City doesn't violate any organizations' freedom of speech when considering which flags might be appropriate.

Councilor Champlin spoke in support of creating a DEIB steering committee comprised of a variety of community members to become involved in this process. Mayor Bouley

indicated it has always been his intent to replace this committee with a larger steering committee.

Committee members discussed whether or not the City currently has the expertise and/or vision to carry out changes the committee may suggest. Consensus was that for some internal changes, like making improvements to the City's website, staff is available. Committee members indicated that for other long-term broader changes, a larger more diverse steering committee and/or the hiring of a consultant would be beneficial in guiding the City through potential DEIJB initiatives/changes.

Mayor Bouley indicated he also hoped to see the City partner with the school district with a goal of both bodies working together toward citywide DEIJB changes.

Mayor Bouley inquired as to whether the committee should consider its vision, at the next committee meeting, for deliverables with which a consultant could assist the City and committee. Mayor Bouley spoke in support of a larger and more diverse steering committee. Councilors Rice Hawkins and Champlin indicated their support for a larger steering committee to assist the City in identifying paths to help make the City as a whole, not just City government, more inclusive and welcoming. Councilor Rice Hawkins suggested consideration be given to providing stipends for committee members when appointments to a large steering committee were proposed.

Councilor Rice Hawkins suggested committee members review the listening session meeting minutes with a goal of identifying both short- and long-term recommendations. Councilor Rice Hawkins further stated that the recommendations would provide the City with both short and long term suggested DEIJB improvements. Consensus was that reviewing meeting minutes to create goals would take time and be more appropriate for the next committee meeting.

Councilor Rice Hawkins discussed the need for the City to respond quicker to hate crimes like the recent protest at the Teatotaler's on Main Street. Mayor Bouley spoke out against the recent protest by members of NSC-131, a white supremacist group, at the Teatotaler's downtown. Councilor Rice Hawkins indicated her support for Mayor Bouley's statement following the protest indicating she felt it was important to continually let the community know that incidents similar in nature to that protest will not be tolerated. Discussion ensued regarding the role of the City vs the general public as well as the role of Elected Officials in follow-up and/or in advance of potentially volatile situations. Consensus was that there is a need for more community conversations.

Public Comment

James McKim, Goffstown resident, President of the Manchester NAACP, and DEIJB Consultant, discussed the value of the City going through the process of a complete and current state assessment that would include all City of Concord stakeholder groups. He spoke in support of including organizations like the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce as well as in support of hiring a consultant to assist the City of Concord with

their DEIJB initiatives. Mr. McKim indicated he has provided DEIJB consultant services to the City of Concord. Committee discussion took place about working toward making the City of Concord a welcoming city where everyone felt they belonged.

David Holt, Somersworth resident as well as the Welcoming NH Coordinator for the NH Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees, indicated he has decades of consulting experience in assisting companies with their DEIJB initiatives offering his support to the City of Concord.

Fisto Ndayishimiye, of Penacook, indicated he felt that a broader committee which included a more diverse group of community members should be created now. He further stated that it was important to get the right people involved noting that he would like to see community wide policies reviewed with a goal of amending or clarifying policies so that they make sense to all community members.

Meredith Cooley, Concord resident and member of Concord Greenspace, stated her agreement that it's important to have the right people appointed as members of a broader steering committee. Ms. Cooley further stated her hope that the broader committee would be tasked with looking at transportation and affordable housing as areas that need improvements for some of the City's most vulnerable residents. Ms. Cooley also spoke in support of the DEIJB committee working with other municipal committees to make policy changes that benefit residents within the community. Brief committee discussion took place about implementing changes that could assist the City in working to become more proactive and less reactive.

Committee members discussed reviewing past meeting minutes prior to the next meeting with a goal of creating a listing of both short and long term DEIJB Committee goals. Committee members also noted that, at their next meeting, they would discuss what they wanted to see in a consultant that could assist the City with their DEIJB efforts.

Committee members discussed a date for their next meeting, deciding they would meet again on Friday, August 11, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

6. Adjournment.

Action: at 1:32 PM, Councilor Rice Hawkins moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

A true copy: I attest:

*Janice Bonenfant
City Clerk*