

TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD
SPRINGFIELD DECLARATION OF INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Springfield Town Hall, 3rdFloor
96 Main Street, Springfield, VT 05156
Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** the meeting was called to order by Chair pattrice jones at 5:31 p.m.
Present in person: Char Osterlund, Susan Dowdell, Chair pattrice jones, Walter Martone, Dan Bannan; Charis Boke present on zoom.
Public via zoom: Amy Howlett
Not present: Brandon Gulnick and Crystal Stevens.
2. **Additions/Subtractions to the Agenda:** pattrice requested that introductions be made for new member Dan Bannan. Members each gave a brief bio.
3. **Public Comment:** No comments.
4. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - a. December 21, 2022 meeting: SD moved/ CB seconded a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Approved with 5 ayes, 1 abstention (DB), and 0 noes.
5. **New Business:**
 - a. Update on Springfield School District (SSD) equity committee. CO reported that this school committee which includes teachers, are planning an event in May titled “Belonging.” It will be held in Comtu Falls Park and the Library will assist. Sixth grade students will be the focus. pj noted that the VINE is also working with students and will assist in promoting the “Belonging” theme.
 - b. VLCT for community recovery. CB reported that this program provides an opportunity for local Inclusion Committees to join in a State-wide support network and may also be a source of funding for local efforts. More information will be provided at a future meeting.
6. **Old Business:**
 - a. Blue Lives Matter flag at town fire department. The Committee discussed the draft flag and banner policy that was prepared by Town Manager Mobus. It was noted that the policy would extend to all town properties and not just buildings – such as parks, town right-of-ways, street utility poles, cyclone fence at the entrance to Riverside Middle School parking lot, etc. The Committee appreciated that the policy limits the display of flags and banners to generally acceptable governmental items (U.S., Vermont, and Springfield Town flags), and also make provisions for ceremonial and event displays that have significance for Springfield, and seasonal/holiday events that are not controversial. CB moved and CO seconded that the DOI Committee communicate to the Town Manager and Selectboard that our Committee believes that the draft policy supports the equity and inclusion goals of the Town and is consistent with the Declaration of Inclusion adopted by the Selectboard. Motion approved with 6 ayes and 0 noes.
 - b. and d. Revision of Town’s Employee Handbook and Equity Screening Tool. WM reported that the Town has not made available a draft of the Handbook for review as of yet. He will ask whether there is a timeframe for its production. Discussion ensued about the Equity Tool and its potential to be used for reviewing the Employee Handbook. CO offered a version of the Tool that has been formatted into an outline to make it easier to work with. CB agreed to take that outline and make it shorter and more usable for the review of the Handbook and other town policies. A new draft will be provided at our next meeting (February 15th) for review. Once approved, this document will be offered to the Town’s HR staff to be used while developing the draft Handbook. WM will report to the Selectboard about this work being done by the Committee under “Committee Reports” at the next Regular Selectboard meeting.
 - c. Ongoing Housing-Related Work.

- i. Follow-ups from November informational meeting; CB will secure a list of the attendees (in person and zoom) from the November event. This list was requested by one of the speakers and the Committee may need the list for future reference. As an outgrowth of the event an ad hoc group was created to explore a warming shelter for Springfield. The group has since disbanded after they had exhausted possible sponsors/locations/funding for such a shelter. Most of the individuals who expressed interest in exploring housing issues further, are on the list of individuals who participated in the warming shelter discussions.
- ii. Fair Housing Handout. pj is working on a draft Handout that will be 2 pages and simple to understand and find resources.
- iii. Housing information repository. SD and the Library are working on developing the repository.
- d. Equity Screening Tool. See item 6.b.
- e. Glossary. Item not discussed.
- f. Informed Consent. It was decided (by consensus) to postpone further work on this item until its need becomes relevant to the immediate work of the Committee.

7. Potential Recommendations to Selectboard:

- a. Housing Committee. CB and WM will meet to consider formulating a recommendation regarding formation of a Housing Committee. The Library has done a needs poll of its patrons. There were over 100 responses, and the number one concern was housing.
- b. Policy Concerning Flags Flown Over Public Buildings. See item 6.a.
- c. Other Recommendations Arising From Above Discussions. Item not discussed

8. **Set date of next regular meeting:** February 15, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 3rd Floor, Selectboard Meeting Room. The meeting will also be accessible through Zoom. For the February meeting (or possible a latter meeting) it was requested that the Committee begin an assessment of the accomplishment during the Committee's first year of operation which first met on April 20, 2022. It was also noted that the first meeting after Town Meeting (March 15, 2023) is when our committee should have an organizational meeting including selection of officers.

9. **Adjournment:** CO moved and SD seconded that we adjourn. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Walter Martone