

TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD
INCLUSION COMMITTEE
Meeting Tuesday, October 24, 2023, 5:30 p.m.
Springfield Town Library • 43 Main Street

FINAL APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by chair pattrice jones at 5:36 p.m. Other committee members present in person were Dan Bannon, Sue Dowdell, Walter Martone, and via Zoom, Char Osterlund.

Committee members absent were: Charis Boke, Caroline Comley, and Marianne Morales.

Also present was Vin Fusca, executive director of Black River Innovation Campus (BRIC). One member of the public, noted as Michael Russell, joined via Zoom later in the meeting and logged off before the end of the meeting.

2. Additions / Subtractions to the Agenda – the following items were added to the agenda:
 - a. New Business letter d. Draft Employee Handbook
 - b. Old Business letter e. On-going Housing-related work #3 Tiny Houses
3. Public Comment: No public comment was voiced or submitted.
4. Announcements
 - a. pattrice shared info about the Speak Out event which was recorded by SAPA TV. The electricity had not been turned on for the speaker system. pattrice cautioned that it could have been perceived as a slight but it was later understood that it was due to a misunderstanding regarding the process. Direct, clear guidelines are needed.
 - b. Sue shared that the library’s community conversation events will host a “Ask Your State Reps” event on December 4th.
5. Approval of Minutes of September meeting: Walter made the MOTION to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by pattrice. All unanimously approved.
6. New Business
 - a. BRIC Summer Actuator program for the LGBTQ+ Community: Vin Fusca explained the Actuator sessions that have been taking place at BRIC. Several more are planned starting in January 2024 and already have some participants signed up. Vin spoke about having a session dedicated specifically for people identifying as LGBTQ+ in order to be more inclusive. It is tentatively scheduled to be held in summer 2024. Vin was seeking input regarding marketing to reach that population and the committee’s thoughts about the project. Committee members mentioned the importance of ensuring the mentors are either part of the community or have businesses that provide products or services for the LGBTQ community.
 - b. Committee vacancy: Brandon submitted a letter of resignation which was accepted with regret at the October 23rd Selectboard meeting. Marianne has not attended meetings. pattrice will reach out one last time. Sue indicated there may be one member of the public interested in joining the committee.

- c. Contribution to town's annual report: patrice submitted the draft for discussion. Members provided suggested changes, including information to help recruit new members. patrice will submit it to the town clerk.
- d. Draft Employee Handbook – Personnel policies are still in draft form. Sue, as a department head, reviewed it and made some suggestions. The committee would like to review it prior to going to the Selectboard.

7. Old Business

- a. SSD Inclusion Committee update (if any): Char has not heard further from the Superintendent of Schools and will reach out.
- b. Follow-up discussion of information received from town manager
 - i. town website accessibility:
 - 1. Committee webpages: Walter suggested to the Selectboard at their October 23rd meeting that each committee/commission write up a summary of what they do for each of their webpages so Brian could add that information/
 - 2. Structure: the group discussed the need for better structure on the website since it can be very difficult to find information on it, especially since the search function does not work well. Suggestions were made to have RVTC students work on it. However, the existing town staff does not have time to work extensively on it and the website needs a professional touch. For now, the members agree the best way to make recommendations for changes is to develop the draft language to be submitted for consideration. The town manager would then be able to revise, if needed, before being added to the website.
 - ii. departmental procedures for putting DOI into practice: currently there are not regular meetings held with all town department heads at once. The town manager does meet individually with each department head on a regular basis. patrice made a MOTION, seconded by Walter, that *the committee recommend that the town manager send the DOI to all department heads and include a discussion of it in the regularly scheduled meeting with the department heads.* Approved unanimously.
- c. Follow-up of review of selected town policies and procedures
 - i. delinquent tax, water, and wastewater assessment collection: Char reported that the information sent along with the delinquent notices included an application form for assistance with little information. Char will draft a proposal for alternate information to be sent which includes more information with clearer instructions regarding how help could be found.
 - ii. Hiring: Caroline was not present and will report on this at the next meeting.
 - iii. public park permitting: Walter looked at the process that Hartford uses but noted that their community's grand list is much greater than Springfield's, giving them more capacity to work on the process.

patrice worked through the processes regarding how to gain permission to use one of the parks for private use. patrice found the website and forms to be

inconsistent and not have clear direction. Not all committee members had time to review the information. All will review more thoroughly before the next meeting. patrice will draft suggested language for the forms and procedures for the committee's consideration at the next meeting before it is sent to the town manager. patrice was encouraged to consider reading levels when drafting the documents.

- d. Discuss information received concerning training for town employees
 - i. Police Department: Walter is reading over the policy regarding citizen complaint procedure and internal complaint investigation and will report further on this next meeting.
 - ii. Fire Department: it is not clear what the FD's complaint procedure is. Walter will ask the town manager about this.
 - iii. Other Departments: no other information was received about other town departments from the town manager. Sue reported that the library continues to focus on inclusivity.
 - e. Ongoing Housing-Related Work
 - i. Identification of rental units – Walter announced that that rental registry ordinance was approved for rescission and will take effect after its 60-day waiting period is finished. The state will be able to provide the information the committee seeks. Chuck Wise, the zoning administrator, will be able to assist.
 - ii. Fair housing handout – this will be completed in the future.
 - iii. Tiny Houses – Dan reported on his communications with Chuck Wise who has been very responsive. Chuck pointed Dan to existing statutes and welcomed Dan's input on the topic. Question regarding MARC's appraisal of available land in Springfield. Walter, who is on their board, said it has not yet been completed.
8. Potential Recommendations to Selectboard: none at this time. See above for recommendations regarding upcoming communication with the town manager.
9. Set date of next regular meeting: November 28, 2023, at 5:30 PM
10. Adjournment: Dan made the **MOTION**, seconded by Walter, to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Dowdell