

**TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD**  
**SPRINGFIELD DECLARATION OF INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

Springfield Town Library

Main Street, Springfield, VT 05156

Tuesday, November 28th, 2023, 5:30 p.m

1. **Call to Order:** the meeting was called to order by Chair pattrice jones at 5:30 PM
  - **Present in person:** Sue Dowdell, Chair pattrice jones, Dan Bannon, Caroline Comley, Char Osterlund (zoom), Charis Boke (zoom)
  - **Not present:** Walter Martone
  
2. **Additions/Subtractions to the Agenda**

Check in/discussion about recent shooting in Burlington
  
3. **Public Comment:** no public present
  
4. **Announcements**

Sue announced the library is hosting our Springfield House Representatives for its conversation series on December 5 starting at 6:00. On December 13, again at 6:00 p.m. it is hosting Trans 101: Education Leads to Understanding, a community conversation led by Owen Daniel-McCarter, a member of Bethel's Equity & Inclusion Committee.
  
5. **Approval of Minutes: October 24th, 2023**

Char had technical difficulties so this was moved down the agenda and discussed after agenda item 7(c)(i); town website accessibility. No changes were made; Char Osterlund moved that we accept the notes as written and Dan Bannon seconded. Unanimous, with Caroline and Charis abstaining since they were not present.
  
6. **New Business**
  - a. **Committee Vacancies**

There are currently 2 vacant seats on the DoI committee. Discussion of how to get the word out. Pattrice will send a press release to the reporter. Char has contacted at least 1 listserv of community organizations.
  
  - b. **Recent shooting in Burlington**

Discussion of the recent shooting of 3 young Palestinian men in Burlington. There is no clear action to be done on the part of the committee; mainly a check in on thoughts/feelings surrounding the current events. Dan asked if a state level equity committee exists. It does- the Office of Racial Equity. Discussed origins of statements such as, "There's no place for hate here". Is there a way to communicate to representatives that issues of prejudice/hate do exist across Vermont? Pattrice reminded

us that this affirms our work and as a committee we will continue to keep doing what we can do in our community.

## 7. Old Business

### a. SSD Inclusion Committee Update (if any)

Char shared equity updates from Sherri Nichols. The school board is reviewing them on Monday, December 4th at their regular meeting. Char can't attend but Caroline volunteered to attend and report back. The updates addressed equity/diversity in terms of hiring practices, academics and test scores, but included nothing about the climate/culture of the school. Many members shared concerns that this is an oversight that needs to be addressed. Students at Springfield HS have reported experiencing harassment based on race, sexual orientation, disability and gender. This goes beyond the curriculum and hiring practices. Sue was in attendance at the last school board meeting over zoom, where this was discussed. She shared that they mainly discussed how the committee would be put together and how the principals would share the information with staff. On December 4th, they'll decide how to choose the committee members. At this time they have an application/questions and a purpose statement for the committee. Charis asked if there was ever an equity committee in the past that was disbanded by the current superintendent. Char remembers an informal one that was formed by teachers that originated as a book study group. It was called an 'equity committee' but fizzled out over time. A statement for the superintendent was outlined: addressing schoolwide culture is important, given that students at SHS have experienced harassment, and we are happy to send a delegate to equity committee meetings to support that work. Sue made a motion that Char and Patrice write and send this statement to the superintendent. Caroline seconded. Unanimous.

### b. New Employee Handbook

Patrice sent comments to Jeff Mobus.

### c. Follow up discussion of information received from town manager

#### i. Town website accessibility

Sue discussed this with Brian. Brian reached out to their vendor and they are looking at redesigning the website and changing the vendor. They may use one that has the ability to send out notices. Brian also removed addresses/phone numbers for all committee members. Charis confirmed this, the website now has emails only. The library website also has some upcoming updates that will increase accessibility of all print/online resources. Sue also recently attended an ADA 101 webinar, she sent the information to the HR manager, suggesting it could be useful for them to attend as well.

#### ii. Departmental procedures for putting DoI into practice

No new information

### d. Follow up of review of selected town policies and procedures

#### i. Delinquent tax, water, and wastewater assessment collection:

Char will update at next meeting

ii. Hiring:  
Jeff recently sent the new hiring policy to their lawyer. We will wait for the next draft of the policy before applying the equity tool.

iii. Public park permitting:  
We will wait until the next meeting to discuss this in depth. As there will be a recommendation that the policy will change, pattrice moved that the committee authorize her and Walter to work on this together. Charis seconded. Unanimous.

- e. Discuss information received concerning training for town employees
- i. Police department
  - ii. Fire department
  - iii. Other departments

No new information. Pattrice will email Walter to see if he has anything new to forward.

- f. Ongoing housing-related work
- i. Identification of rental units
  - ii. Fair housing handout

The state passed an act that will create a rental housing registry. There was a rental registry ordinance in Springfield that selectboard had voted to rescind, after the vote there is a waiting period for objections. We will not be covered by the state registry until Springfield's registry is gone.

Charis will find answers to the following questions:

- 1) When does the rescindment take effect?
- 2) When will our landlords be required to register with the state?
- 3) How will they be informed of this?
- 4) When will we have access to a rental registry that we can use?

Sue believes Chuck Weiss (sp?) would have those answers. Until we have this information the handout is moot.

**8. Potential recommendations to Selectboard: none**

**9. Set date of next regular meeting: December 27th, 2023 at 5:30 PM**

Caroline will not be in attendance.

**10. Adjournment**

Sue moved and Dan seconded that we adjourn. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Comley