

**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism (IDEA) Initiative**  
**Charge**  
**February 22, 2021**

**Context:** Embedded in our town vision statement is a commitment to fostering economic, racial, ethnic, and age diversity within Lincoln. This longstanding commitment was brought into sharper focus and scrutiny last spring after the murder of George Floyd. Members of our community responded to that tragedy by organizing vigils, reading and discussing books that address systemic racism, and by asking town government to explicitly examine the systems and actions of our own town. In response, the Board of Selectmen launched a series of events to expand understanding of the current state and attitudes of policing, social services, and land planning in Lincoln, the roles and jurisdictions of town committees, and to explore partnerships with community groups and institutions.

Through these conversations, town residents have made it clear that they want to engage in candid discussions about what diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism look like in Lincoln, and to establish a long-term, town-led group that will keep Lincoln's vision of fostering and supporting diversity at the center of all we do. A number of themes have emerged that help to inform future work:

- **Understanding terminology** — The words diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism get used in many ways and many contexts. How do we create a shared understanding of their meaning and implications for Lincoln?
- **Understanding Lincoln** — Why is Lincoln the way it is, relative to these elements of IDEA? What is the lived experience for residents who identify as being a member of a historically underrepresented group? What do out-of-towners experience when they visit and interact with residents? Why isn't Lincoln more diverse? To what extent might solutions for addressing IDEA change specific characteristics many residents hold dear?
- **Who do we want to be?** – What are the problems we are trying to solve, and for whom? Are we addressing all the IDEA elements concurrently? Is it more pragmatic or impactful to focus on one specific element at a time?
- **Measuring progress** — How will we know that we have made a positive difference in addressing the targeted problem, improving specific IDEA elements? What is our town's current state relative to the problem? How does Lincoln compare to other towns? To which towns should we compare ourselves?
- **What to celebrate and when** — Some community members have expressed that Lincoln already has diversity and we should start celebrating what we have. Others think that it is not time to celebrate as much as it is time to answer hard questions and seek change.

Recognizing the breadth and depth of the themes above, the BOS is establishing a preliminary Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Initiative to thoughtfully consider these themes, discern where to start, and to recommend a structure and charge for a future, change-oriented, longer-term, properly resourced IDEA Committee, as described below.

**Charge for IDEA Initiative**

**Mission:** The Lincoln Board of Selectmen (Board) is establishing the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism Initiative ("IDEA" or "Initiative") to recognize and support diversity for all who live, work, learn, and visit in Lincoln, and to establish a long-term action plan to identify and address unconscious bias, to ensure just and equitable policies and inclusion, and to actively promote a diverse and anti-racist community.

The IDEA Initiative is envisioned as a partnership between the Town and community groups and institutions. It shall consist of up to 11 voting members, including a member of the Board of Selectmen. In addition, IDEA will encourage liaisons from groups not already represented by a voting member and explicitly reach out to the community for broad participation.

The BOS recognizes that the work of IDEA will be dynamic and will need to develop as the group engages with the community, therefore this charge is intended as a set of guideposts to the Initiative as it begins its work. IDEA will make quarterly reports to the Board and will recommend a longer-term action plan and an initial vision for a standing committee by Town Meeting 2022.

It is expected that IDEA will work with an outside consultant and, as a town committee, will adhere to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Considering the themes outlined earlier in this document, which should be selected as initial points of focus and why?
- Past, present and future: What can we learn? What do we know? What is our vision?
- Do we have the will, sustained energy, and resources to work towards our vision?
- What is the importance of each type of work IDEA chooses to do and where does it lead?
- What are the outcomes we are looking for?
- What kind of information, training, or consultation will be needed to support the work?

**Types of Work:** Although it is expected that IDEA's specific goals will develop and change as data is gathered and questions are raised, there are certain anticipated types of work:

- Training: IDEA members will go through training to build a shared vocabulary, set of guiding questions, and the group's capacity to engage with the community around issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and anti-racism.
- Gathering Information:
  - Listening: IDEA will find multiple ways to gather first-hand experiences, attitudes, and visions from residents, employees, students, and visitors.
  - Data Collection: IDEA will identify and collect the types of data that are important for understanding Lincoln within the context of the region. It will suggest a baseline set of metrics that can be measured regularly to determine progress on the specific proposed challenges IDEA recommends the town target.
    - Sub-committees may be established as needed to focus on particular issues.
- Collaboration: IDEA will serve as a central collaboration point for Town and community groups, committees, and individuals.
  - IDEA recognizes that Town and community groups may each have separate goals and initiatives that are related to, but not organized by the Initiative.
- Communication: IDEA will establish regular communication tools to provide transparency to and to engage with the community.
- Expected Deliverables:
  - Share findings on a regular basis with the Board at least on a quarterly basis.
  - Identify immediate and short-term actions.
  - Plan for the Next Phase: The Initiative will develop a recommended action plan that includes short-term priorities and that lays out recommendations for a standing IDEA

Committee, which the IDEA Initiative will share with the town at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

- The plan for the standing committee will address findings, goals, and next steps, and will include specific financial and personnel resources needs.
- Believing that standing committees are most effective when they regularly reassess their composition, goals, and effectiveness, the Board expects that the recommendation will outline an iterative process for reviewing the composition and work of the IDEA Committee within a specified time horizon, of not more than 3 years, when Annual Town Meeting will hear a report and a recommendation for how best to refocus the IDEA Committee's work.

**Membership:** The IDEA Initiative shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. All appointments will continue through Town Meeting 2022, at which time the action plan will recommend the membership composition and terms of the standing committee that will be going forward.

- *Voting Members (up to 11 – required to be Lincoln residents unless a student)*
  - Member, Board of Selectmen (1)
  - One member nominated by the LPS School Committee (1)
  - One current student of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional HS (1)
  - Up to eight community members (8)
- *Liaisons – These will be members who shall regularly communicate the work of IDEA to their groups and will be asked to weigh in on all decisions. Groups already represented by members will not need a formal liaison. The following list is a suggestion; all Town and community groups are encouraged to engage with the IDEA (Liaisons do not need to be Lincoln residents.)*
  - Town Boards: Housing Commission; Council on Aging Board; Planning Board, Historical Commission, Green Energy Committee, Conservation, Parks & Recreation, Celebrations Committee, Lincoln Library, Bemis Trustees, etc.
  - Community Groups: A middle school student(s), WIDE, PTO, METCO Coordinating Committee, Historical Society, religious institutions, private preschools, Rural Land Foundation/Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, Lincoln Garden Club, etc.
  - Community Institutions: Historic New England, deCordova Sculpture Park & Museum, Drumlin Farm, Food Project, Farrington NatureLinc, etc.
- *Ex Officio Members*
  - Town Administrator or Designee
  - LPS Superintendent or Designee
  - COA Director or Designee

It is the Board's goal to appoint a committee with majority membership from historically underrepresented groups.

**Governance:**

- The IDEA Initiative shall meet at least on a monthly basis.
- Meetings shall be open to the public in compliance with Open Meeting Law. This is true both for IDEA meetings and for meetings of any sub-committees.
- All communications between members and with the public shall be in compliance with Open Meeting Law.
- IDEA shall appoint a Chair, a Vice-Chair (or co-Chairs), and a Recording Secretary.