

**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism (IDEA) Initiative**  
**Thursday, July 1, 2021; 7:00pm via Zoom**

Virtual Meeting Pursuant to Gov. Baker's March 12, 2020, Order, as extended on  
June 15, 2021, with the Governor's signing of Senate Bill #2475,  
Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law

**Present:** Gray Birchby; Jennifer Glass; Margit Griffith; Jen James; Russell Kramp; Becky McFall, Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools; Margaret McLaughlin; Abbey Salon; Susan Taylor, Deborah Wallace; Ian Spencer, liaison, Public Safety.

**Absent:** Abigail Butt, Director, Council on Aging & Human Services; Tim Higgins, Town Administrator.

Jen James brought the meeting to order at 7:00pm. She noted that the meeting is being conducted remotely in a way that is consistent with Governor Baker's March 2012 Emergency Order, which was extended by bill S.2475 signed by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021. The legislation suspends the requirement to hold meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. And it allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as there is reasonable public access.

**Review of Norms:** Ms. James noted the revised list of norms will be ready next time and she reviewed the agenda.

**Check In:** Abbey Salon will put the group into breakout rooms to talk about what success will look like if this group does its work well. The breakout rooms lasted about 5 minutes, and then individuals were invited to share ideas. Some thoughts:

- There's an aura of classism in town; addressing it is key to moving forward.
- How do we "take the walls down?" How do we examine and change mindsets so that people don't feel threatened?
- How do we get past suspicion of the "other?" For example, the impulse to call the police because someone doesn't "look like they belong."
- We need to have clarity about the purpose and the charge of the group. Is this about town systems or individual experiences?

**Minutes:** Margit Griffith presented the minutes from June 9<sup>th</sup>. Becky McFall noted that there were two abstentions in the roll call votes as she and Margit Griffith who were not present at the prior meeting. There was also a typo.

**MOVED:** Susan Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes of June 9, 2021, as amended. Gray Birchby seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by roll call vote: Birchby, aye; Glass, aye; Griffith, aye; James, aye; Kramp, aye; McFall, aye; McLaughlin, aye; Salon, aye; Taylor, aye; Wallace, abstain; Spencer, abstain.

- Deborah Wallace said that she abstained as she joined the meeting after the revisions were presented.

**Appointment of Chair/Co-Chairs:** Ms. James started a discussion about defining the Initiative's leadership model. She noted that the first three meetings have been planned by rotating pairs of members, and she asked the group to share thoughts about whether it wanted to appoint a chair/vice-chair, or a pair of co-chairs, or continue with a rotation.

- Ms. Griffith noted that after a long-term Chair stepped down from the committee, the Parks & Recreation Committee decided to rotate the chair position every three months. This way the workload is shared among members.
- Deb Wallace suggested that she would be pleased to have Jen James lead the meetings and to have rotating assistance.
- Russell Kramp said that the way we have operated to date has been less straightforward than a more traditional model but has been more inclusive. Jennifer Glass agreed that the way the group started off was conducive to getting to know each other.
- Ms. Salon said that really understanding our charge will help the group have direction and keep moving forward.
- Ms. James asked Jennifer Glass to talk about the role of the chair. Ms. Glass said there are several aspects to the role:
  - Technical/housekeeping – The chair schedules meetings, sets the agenda, ensures the meeting times/agendas are posted in accordance with Open Meeting Law, and makes sure minutes are posted once approved.
  - Vision – The chair also develops a vision for how to shape the committee’s work and is often someone who generates drafts of documents and presentations.
  - Communication – It is usually the chair who presents to other committees or at Town Meeting.
- Ms. Taylor asked Ms. Glass whether the Select Board had a role in choosing a chair. Ms. Glass replied that it does not and that there is no expectation that she (Ms. Glass) be in that role.
- Dr. McFall noted that traditionally town committees are led by residents, not professional staff.
- Several members underscored Ms. Wallace’s opinion that Ms. James would be an effective chair.
  - Ms. Glass asked if, presuming her willingness to take on the role, she would be like to have a vice chair or a co-chair, and Ms. James said she would like to have a co-chair.
  - Dr. McFall suggested that Ms. Salon, who has gone through considerable diversity training, would be a good choice for co-chair.
- Ms. Glass offered to be the recording secretary for the group.

MOVED: Ms. Taylor moved that Jen James and Abbey Salon be appointed as Co-Chairs and that Jennifer Glass be appointed Recording Secretary. Ms. Griffith seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by roll-call vote: Birchby, aye; Glass, aye; Griffith, aye; James, aye; Kramp, aye; McFall, aye; McLaughlin, aye; Salon, aye; Taylor, aye; Wallace, aye; Spencer, concur.

**Discussion – Charge and Deliverables:** Ms. James reminded the group of the specific deliverables laid out in the charge and asked the group to think about actions it needs to take. As stated in the charge, the IDEA Initiative will:

- *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.*

Ms. James suggested going into breakout groups to brainstorm 8-10 steps that the group will need to take, or ideas that should be explored between now and March 2022. For example, work needs to be done to define the problem – what are residents experiencing and what do they need from the town? Also, how do we reduce bias and institute anti-racist policies?

After some discussion, the group decided to stay together and work together on a shared Google document to brainstorm ideas. Over several minutes, each member was able to type in ideas. Ms. James and Ms. Salon use the document to develop a set of proposed next steps. They will create a .pdf of the current document and share it before synthesizing.

- Ms. James said that If members have additional ideas, they should send them directly to her or to Ms. Salon, not to the whole group.

**Increasing the Diversity of the Group:** Ms. James said that she had had a few individual conversations about whether the IDEA should make a further effort to reach out to the community to try to build the racial diversity of the group. Ms. Griffith said that she had reached out to some specific people and that they had expressed a sense of exhaustion because there are so few people of color in Lincoln, and they are asked to be part of many groups.

Members shared ideas:

- Could we send out an invitation to groups in town?
- Should we expand this group, or instead concentrate on what we think the next group might look like?
- Mr. Kramp asked about tapping into the school community and families from Boston. Dr. McFall noted that the Lincoln schools have been deeply involved in similar work. Ms. Glass suggested that it would be helpful for this group to get up to speed on what the schools have learned and are planning to do.
- Detective Spencer noted that there is a Lincoln-Sudbury High School Racial Climate Task Force and a Lincoln Town Staff Diversity Committee; He sits on both committees and can serve as a liaison between the work of those groups and the IDEA Initiative.
- Ms. Glass outlined how the School Building Committee drew on the knowledge of liaisons from about a dozen town boards in shaping the school project. The liaisons are treated as voting members, asked to weigh in, and to vote their opinion on matters. Their votes are only treated differently if there is a divergence of opinion, and the SBC needs to count the votes of appointed members. Ms. Glass proposed that the current members of this group be the official voting core and that IDEA should reach out and build a system of liaisons as its work progresses.

#### **Wrap Up and Closing:**

- Next Meeting. Ms. James, making the case for consistency, proposed that the group meet every 3 weeks on Tuesdays at 7:00pm. The members agreed to this schedule.
- Ms. James led a closing exercise, asking each member to use one word to describe how they were feeling at that moment.

MOVED: Ms. James made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ind. Birchby. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote: Birchby, aye; Glass, aye; Griffith, aye; James, aye; Kramp, aye; McFall, aye; McLaughlin, aye; Salon, aye; Taylor, aye; Wallace, aye; Spencer, concur.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Glass.