

**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism (IDEA) Initiative
Tuesday, July 20, 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: Jen James, co-Chair; Abbey Salon, co-Chair; Gray Birchby; Jennifer Glass; Margaret McLaughlin; Susan Taylor, Deborah Wallace.

Absent: Margit Griffith, member; Russell Kramp, member; Abigail Butt, ex officio, Director, Council on Aging & Human Services; Tim Higgins, ex officio, Town Administrator; Becky McFall, ex officio, Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools; Ian Spencer, liaison, Public Safety.

Welcome: Jen James, co-Chair, brought the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. She noted that the meeting is being conducted remotely in a way that is consistent with Governor Baker's March 2020 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.

Ms. James started the meeting with a check-in question and gave each participant an opportunity to respond.

Ms. James said that she has spent time re-reading the charge and has made a plan to keep us on track to be ready to report to residents at the 2022 Town Meeting. She reviewed the meeting agenda.

Minutes: Ms. James asked if there were any revisions to the minutes.

MOVED: Susan Taylor moved to approve the minutes of July 1, 2021 as presented; Margaret McLaughlin seconded the motion and the minutes were approved by roll-call vote: James, aye; Salon, aye; Birchby, aye; Glass, aye; McLaughlin, aye; Taylor, aye; Wallace, aye.

- There was a question about the length of the minutes and whether they needed to be so long. After some discussion, the group agreed that as the meetings are not being recorded, it is helpful to have a good record of the conversation.

Review of Group Norms: Ms. James had distributed an updated set of group norms in preparation for the meeting (see below) and sought feedback from the group. Ms. Taylor thought they had a nice tone as written. She wondered what happens if someone repeatedly ignores the norms? Ms. James said that the norms are there so that the members of the group can remind each other about expectations. She and Jennifer Glass expressed that with a volunteer group, it is most effective to have individual conversations with members if issues arise.

Review of Charge and Timeline: Ms. James said that she spent time reviewing the big themes that are in the charge and that she suggests that the group discuss each one in order to decide if it is something we think we want to address. Those themes are:

- Understanding terminology/developing a shared glossary of terminology.
- Understanding Lincoln past and present.
- What problem(s) are we trying to solve?
- How do we define and measure progress?
 - Current status – baseline data.
 - What is the work IDEA will do?

- How and when to evaluate progress?
- Discern where the work of next committee will start.
- Recommend a structure for the next committee:
 - Size, members, leadership
 - Frequency of meetings, reporting structure, relationship to other groups in town.

Ms. James noted that IDEA has 11 more meetings if we continue meeting every three weeks between now and Town Meeting and she presented a proposed structure of the content we need to cover. The group provided feedback and specific ideas:

- If IDEA is going to recommend a budget for the next committee, a request should be finalized by 11/23 before the Finance Committee's first FY23 budget workshop.
- Audit of current conditions and viewpoints. Agreeing that this is an important task, there was discussion about whether IDEA is going to do the audit or if we are recommending that the next group do the audit. Ms. James suggested that the audit is for the next group, as they are very time consuming. She sees our job as determining what happens next.
- There was some preliminary discussion about "what problem(s) are we trying to solve?" Different members have different ideas, and there was a general agreement that it will be helpful to have the "understanding Lincoln" conversation on August 10th before getting to the problem-solving conversation.
 - Re "understanding Lincoln" – what is the work we need to do to get this information? Ms. James said that it is not up to us to provide the information. We are shaping the work of the next group.
 - Ms. McLaughlin wondered what an audit involves. Ms. Glass noted that the Lincoln Public Schools spent a lot of time conducting an audit and thought we could learn from what the schools did. Ms. Taylor explained that a large group of faculty and administration were involved in breaking down the issues and in conducting surveys and focus groups. She said that LPS could probably share some links to key information and noted that there were two paid staff members working on the survey.
 - The August 31st meeting will be dedicated to this topic. Ms. James will send the link to the report and will find out if there was an overall outline of the work
 - Ms. Taylor suggested that we have an open forum to invite people into the conversation. Ms. Glass suggested that IDEA should be ready to use State of the Town as a way to share and gather information. Also, that it would be good to hold a public forum in February as we are drafting the report.
 - Gray Birchby offered to help with presentations.

Understanding Terminology: In preparation for the meeting, Ms. James had distributed a glossary of terms. The question for IDEA is whether we want to work with community on a shared set of terms or whether this is work for the next committee. Several ideas were discussed:

- It could be good for the major groups in town to work together on a common glossary. This could be a concrete task for this group or a task for the next group.
- It might be educational to have community discussions about some of the more controversial or nuanced terms.
- Conversely, it may make sense to talk about terms as they are appropriate to the conversation, as was done during the CARAT training.
- Ms. James leans toward asking the next committee to work on this piece.

Other Items:

- Ms. Taylor suggested we identify sources of demographic data. Ms. Glass noted that the census data will be available by zip code in the fall and that we could work with the Assessors on housing data. Ms. McLaughlin expressed concern about the reliability of the census when we're dealing with small numbers.
- Other questions we may want to ask:
 - Why do people move here? Why do they stay?
 - Are there shared community values?
 - How do we fit into the broader context of the region and the state?
 - What are the attitudes of people in town? How do we think about class, race, religion, etc.?
 - To the extent that there isn't diversity, equity, and inclusion, why?
 - Should we start with our Lincoln vision statement? Do the values expressed need a re-write? Do we live up to them?
- Before the next meeting, Ms. Glass will send Ms. James a copy of the town values and Ms. James will share materials from the schools' work.

Adjournment:

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Glass

11 Meetings...

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| • July 20 | Revised look at charge and Terminology |
| • August 10 | Understanding Lincoln |
| • August 31 | What Problem Are We Trying to Solve |
| • September 21 | Measuring Progress |
| • October 12 | Discern Where to Start |
| • November 2 | Recommend a Structure |
| • November 23 | Recommend a Charge (1/2) |
| • December 14 | Recommend a Charge (2/2) |
| • January 4 | Parking Lot |
| • January 25 | Presentation of First Draft |
| • February 15 | Presentation of Second Draft/Discuss Town Meeting Presentation |
| • March 8 | FINAL REVIEW OF REPORT & PRESENTATION |

CONVERSATIONAL NORMS FOR THE IDEA INITIATIVE

We recognize the value of our diverse experiences, styles, backgrounds and perspectives; we encourage one another to share our points of view and listen respectfully.

We commit to respectfully pushing on ideas and statements made that are not aligned to our aspirational values of eliminating bias and systemic barriers to individuals in our community. Pushing is a commitment to building the collective awareness and growth of the members of our group.

We will work hard to analyze and understand perspectives which conflict with ours and will remain open to altering our positions. We may disagree with ideas, not individuals.

We acknowledge that disagreement is not only inevitable but can help individuals and groups produce better outcomes.

We will speak from our own experience and use “I” statements, as in “I think”, “I feel”, “I believe”, or “I want”.

We will practice both/and thinking that invites us to see that more than one reality or perspective can be true at the same time. Using both/and thinking can be very helpful in reconciling differences and conflicts that do not present easy solutions.

We will be aware of both the intent and impact of our actions that will allow us to consider that in cross-cultural interactions, our intent might not match our impact. This work requires a willingness to take risks and to exchange and receive honest feedback about the impact of our words and actions on others.

We will respect confidentiality by honoring personal sharing and not repeating personal details outside of the group. Participants are encouraged to freely share their own learnings about this work.

We will uphold trust as everyone has come to the table to learn, grow, and share. We acknowledge that we may be at different stages of learning on the content and discussion topics. We will trust that people will do the best they can.

We will share the air and include all voices in the discussion. If you have a tendency to dominate discussions, take a step back and help the group invite others to speak. If you tend to stay quiet, challenge yourself to share ideas so others can learn from you.