

**IDEA Initiative  
Public Meeting via Zoom  
Tuesday, August 31, 2021  
7:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/95502834166?pwd=aEwydU4xRVZHYkdNcldZOGdlZk1iQT09>

Meeting ID: 955 0283 4166; Passcode: 273748; Dial in: +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

**Present:** Jen James, Co-chair; Abbey Salon, Co-chair; Gray Birchby; Jennifer Glass; Russell Kramp; Margaret McLaughlin; Susan Taylor, Becky McFall, ex officio, Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools; Ian Spencer, liaison, Public Safety.

**Absent:** Deborah Wallace; Abigail Butt, ex officio, Council on Aging and Human Services; Tim Higgins, ex officio, Town Administrator.

**Welcome:** Jen James, Co-chair, brought the meeting to order at 7:01 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 reviewed the agenda.

The book discussion will be moved to October.

**Minutes Review and Vote:** Susan Taylor moved to accept the August 10, 2021 minutes as amended. Gray Birchby seconded the motion, which passed by a roll call vote: Birchby, aye; Glass, aye; James, aye; Kramp, abstain; McLaughlin, aye; Salon, aye; Taylor, aye; Higgins, abstain; McFall, aye; Spencer, concur.

**Review of Progress to Date:** This item will be put on the next meeting agenda.

**Discussion: What problem(s) are we trying to solve?** Ms. James said that this conversation can begin to be difficult, and we are coming with our own histories. We need to be as objective as possible and not make assumptions. We should use the group norms to guide us. This is the time to practice these kinds of conversations. Ms. James said the conversation can focus on the big picture or detailed ideas, and she invited members to share their thoughts, which included:

- Town has a culture of elitism, e.g. wealth is talked about as though everyone shares the same baseline.
- How do we get people to engage in the hard work?
- There is often a disconnect between stated ideals and actions.
- The idea of moving an entire town is daunting; people need to do individual work.
- How do we get our neighbors engaged? There should be hundreds of people participating in this discussion.
- People need to know that there is a real reason to engage in this work. On the opening day of school for faculty, adults and students were invited to tell their personal stories to try to move the conversation beyond an intellectual exercise. It is important to gather stories.
- What can the town do to demonstrate its commitment? How we show who we are and what we stand for? What are the concrete steps we can begin to take?
  - Signs in different languages
  - Look at what is featured on our websites
  - Examine the names on town buildings

- Work will require a multi-pronged approach with individuals and town institutions to make the work pervasive. Need to dig in to make structural changes.
  - “Self, other, organization” as a structure. Who’s in the room?
- How do we prepare town staff and officials when there is pushback? How do we support those who are moving forward with the work?
  - The schools are sending out a message to the community about the work, why it’s important, what it looks like at different ages. If staff, volunteers are afraid of pushback, they will not do the work.
    - There needs to be a unified statement from the town.
- What is the capacity of the town to make change? Do we want to do the work?
- Can this group decide whether to concentrate on town vs. individual work? This is a town-appointed committee, and it is logical that its work is centered on the town as an institution. This could include:
  - Offer town-wide training for boards and staff
  - Figure out how to make town staff and boards more diverse
  - Focus on how the town can live up to its ideals
    - An outcome for the committee is to create the “why” for the town. Why this work is important. Many people do not know the specific Lincoln stories and experiences, and they need to know the stories to understand the benefit. At the same time need to be careful about “victim stories.”
    - Build community understand about the value in living in an actively anti-racist, equitable town.
- Does this work need a paid professional guide? There is some discussion about towns sharing diversity coordinators. Is there a role that could be shared between the schools and the town?
- Could we develop a “We are Lincoln” campaign? Identifying Boston students and Lincoln Woods as our only diversity allows a disconnect between the town and this work.
- There was general agreement that we should be focused on the town.
  - Therefore, what problems do we want to solve?
  - Many town committees participated in the CARAT training hosted by WIDE. Ms. James said we could get information about the kinds of work boards are taking on.
- For the next iteration of this group:
  - What is the visioning and reporting structure?
  - What are concrete actionable steps we can take?
  - Could we develop a checklist of what each committee/department can start with and have it be part of our public accounting; e.g. the Town’s Annual Report?
- A concern was raised that the work this group does might be ignored by the next group. How do we make sure that what we’re doing is meaningful? The charge is very broad and diffuse.

**Discussion: Preliminary Budget Ideas:** This will be moved to the next meeting.

**Adjournment:** Russell Kramp made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. McLaughlin. The motion was passed with a roll call vote: Birchby, aye; Glass, aye; James, aye; Kramp, aye; McFall, aye; McLaughlin, aye; Salon, aye; Taylor, aye; Spencer, concur.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Glass