

**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism (IDEA)  
Committee Charge  
February 22, 2021; Updated October 7, 2024**

**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 after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. 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 Select Board launched a series of events to expand understanding of the (then) 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 made it clear that they want to engage in candid discussions about what diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism looks 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, in 2020 the Select Board established 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. The charge was revised in 2021 to reflect to change the name from the IDEA Initiative to the IDEA Committee, to focus the work of IDEA on Town Government, and to reflect the intention to hire a consultant to help assess current attitudes and practices and to inform future work. The charge below, as revised in 2024, is intended to provide a framework that allows the IDEA Committee to plan and adapt over time:

**Charge for IDEA Committee**

**Mission:** The Select Board (Board) is establishing the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism Committee (“IDEA” or “Committee”) to recognize and support equity for all who live, work, learn, and visit

in Lincoln, and to establish short- and long-term action plans 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 Committee will primarily focus on Town government, while also fostering partnerships between the Town and community groups and institutions. It shall consist of up to 11 voting members, including a member of the Select Board. 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 Select Board 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 Committee. IDEA will make regular reports to the Board and the community. IDEA and any subcommittees will adhere to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

### **Guiding Questions:**

- Past, present and future: How do we continue to use data to understand where we are and where we want to go?
- How do we embed this work into the work of the Town? What resources do we need?
- 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: This could be for IDEA members, other town boards and committees, and residents.
- Gathering Information:
  - Listening: Use multiple methods to gather first-hand experiences, attitudes, and visions from residents, employees, students, and visitors.
  - Data Collection: Identify and collect the types of data that are important for understanding Lincoln within the context of the region. This may include development of 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 and driver for Town and community groups, committees, and individuals interested in embedding the work we are doing in their own policies and initiatives.
  - IDEA recognizes that Town and community groups may each have their own equity goals and initiatives that are related to, but not organized by the Committee.
- Communication: IDEA will establish regular communication tools to provide transparency to and to engage with the community.
- Expected Deliverables:
  - Communicate on a regular basis with the Select Board and the community.
  - Develop and implement an annual rolling action plan.

**Budget:** IDEA will be expected to make annual recommendations to the Select Board for any needed staffing, training, and budget resources.

**Membership:** The IDEA Committee shall be appointed by the Select Board. All appointments will be for one year and members will be reconfirmed by the Board annually.

- *Voting Members (up to 11 – required to be Lincoln residents unless a student)*
  - Member, Select Board (1)
  - One member nominated by the LPS School Committee (1)
  - Up to nine community members\* (9)
- *\* Strong preference to have one member be a current Lincoln-Sudbury high school student.*
- *Liaisons – These will be members who will regularly communicate the work of IDEA to their boards/committees. They will be asked to weigh in on all decisions but are not counted as part of the quorum. Some boards and committees may already be represented by voting members. All Town boards and committees, town departments, and community groups are encouraged to engage with the IDEA Committee. (Liaisons do not need to be Lincoln residents.)*
- *Ex Officio Members – These members will be asked to weigh in on all decisions but are not counted as part of the quorum.*
  - Town Administrator or Designee
  - Lincoln Public Schools Superintendent or Designee
  - Council on Aging & Human Services Director or Designee

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

**Governance:**

- The IDEA Committee will meet at least on a monthly basis.
- Meetings will 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 comply with Open Meeting Law.
- IDEA shall appoint a Chair, a Vice-Chair (or co-Chairs), and a Recording Secretary.