

Town of Medway
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Advisory) Committee
November 30, 2021 - 6:00PM
Sanford Hall

Committee Members Present (In-Person): Dan Kerls, Susan Dietrich, Khalid Abdi, Bill Kingsbury, and Andrea Crow Henry

Committee Members Present (Virtually): Brian Sharkey and Judith Lane

Committee Members Absent: John Foresto and Marques Crosby

Community Members Present: None

1. Call to Order

At 6:03PM, Mr. Kerls called the meeting to order. He confirmed the attendance of each member: Dietrich: present, Sharkey: present, Kingsbury: present, Abdi: present, Crow Henry: present, Lane: present, Kerls: present.

2. Public Comment

There were none at this time.

3. Focus Group Final Presentations

Mr. Kingsbury asked if the committee still planned to do multiple focus groups on the same day; Ms. Dietrich reminded the committee that the goal was to complete the town focus groups by the end of this week (ending 12/3/21). She shared that she connected with Dr. Pires and scheduled a focus group for 12/8/21 at 3:30pm in the presentation room at the middle school. Furthermore, she mentioned that the Director of Student Services, an educator from each school, and Dr. Pires will all be participating.

Mr. Kingsbury shared that 12/7/21 is the tentative date for the police focus group. He offered to work around the schedule of the town in order to do them in close succession. However, he raised concerns about not having his intended group of individuals available on this day. Ms. Dietrich suggested doing individual follow-up, if necessary, but suggested that he do the police focus group during the first week of January; Mr. Kingsbury agreed to schedule the focus group on January 4, 2022 after 10AM. Mr. Kerls and Ms. Crow Henry were both willing to facilitate the focus group.

Mr. Kerls agreed to follow up with Mr. Foresto about his plans for the town focus group.

Mr. Sharkey shared that he does not yet have the updated guide, but will have it prepared for the committee's next meeting on 12/7/21.

Ms. Dietrich reminded the committee to provide the focus groups with the prepared question ahead of time, as well as provide a link to the committee website to see the committee's charge,

mission, and other relevant contextual details. She asked what approach the other members thought would be best. Mr. Kingsbury suggested sharing all of the information in the form of a PDF via email ahead of time. Ms. Dietrich also suggested informing the members that they will be expected to introduce themselves and explain their role within their respective organization, as well as their connection to the committee. Mr. Sharkey and Mr. Kerls also suggested sharing the agreed-upon definitions with participants in advance. Ms. Dietrich suggested listing the terms at the top then providing space for notes below. Moreover, she also suggested that the committee members introduce themselves first in order to create a more comfortable and open atmosphere.

Ms. Crow Henry inquired about other groups of people, such as single parents, who might feel the agreed-upon question might be too broad. She voiced concerns that the question would limit hearing about people's perspectives and potentially sound offensive.

Ms. Dietrich responded, sharing that individuals will be able to respond in a more independent, flexible manner as part of the committee's survey; she clarified that the agreed-upon question will only be used for the structured focus groups (town, police, schools, etc.).

Ms. Crow Henry suggested having a member of the underrepresented groups (single parents, LGBTQ+ individuals, etc.), particularly ones that might not currently be known, come to a committee meeting. She was worried that the current approach might unintentionally generalize individuals on the basis of their respective groups.

Mr. Kerls suggested working with the town to solicit the voices of all individuals who may not wish to identify with a particular focus group in order to receive the most comprehensive feedback.

Ms. Dietrich reminded the committee of their previous conversations about activating their own networks to hear from the general population and citizenry in whatever format they prefer.

Ms. Dietrich also reiterated the need for a one page document that encompasses all necessary information that participants would need upfront.

Mr. Kerls and Ms. Dietrich discussed the importance of debriefing on the town focus group, as long as it is done prior to the next meeting, in order to inform the future focus groups.

Ms. Dietrich also reminded the committee of the need for a community forum in late February or early March. The second forum would take place in May.

Ms. Crow Henry suggested having an alternative to note taking during the focus groups; in response, Mr. Sharkey shared that the committee could use a transcription service. Similarly, Mr. Kerls underscored the importance of considering literacy levels; based on his previous work experience, he suggested aiming for a sixth grade reading level to ensure all community members are able to comprehend and therefore participate.

Ms. Dietrich asked about translating the questions and materials to languages other than English. Ms. Crow Henry supported this idea, suggesting Mandarin and Portuguese in particular. In

addition, Mr. Kerls considered the potential for seeking translators. Similarly, Ms. Dietrich also suggested being audio-visually accessible to all community members. Mr. Abdi noted that Zoom provides captions for individuals with hearing loss or impairment. Mr. Kerls also inquired if there is usually an American Sign Language interpreter at town meetings; the committee members clarified that this is not typically provided.

4. Other Committee Business

VOTE: Ms. Dietrich moved to approve the minutes from the 11/16/21 minutes as amended. Mr. Kingsbury seconded the motion. Lane: aye, Sharkey: aye, Abdi: aye, Kingsbury: aye, Crow Henry: aye, Kerls: aye, Dietrich: aye. VOTE: 7-0.

Mr. Kingsbury raised the issue of the committee's website. In response, Ms. Dietrich shared that she sent an abridged version of the committee's schedule to Mr. Crosby, who is testing the committee's email account. She shared that they are looking into being able to respond from the shared account.

For the next meeting, Ms. Dietrich suggested that the committee discuss website and email updates, debrief the town focus group (pending its completion), review the meeting minutes from July and November, identify dates for the community forums, create a plan for the community survey, and ensure accessibility in the committee's outreach and discussions.

5. Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Law

The present committee members reviewed and signed the provided materials.

Mr. Kerls kept copies for all absent committee members and will provide them at the next meeting.

Ms. Crow Henry noted that many of the committee members identify with the subgroups outlined by the committee. She wanted to ensure that committee members can participate in the focus groups as individuals, not committee representatives. Ms. Dietrich clarified that this was the intended charge of the committee and that any questions on the matter can be relayed to Allison Potter.

Motion to Adjourn: At 6:58PM, Mr. Kerls offered a motion to adjourn. Ms. Crow Henry seconded this motion, which passed unanimously. Sharkey: aye, Lane: aye, Dietrich: aye, Kingsbury: aye, Crow Henry: aye, Abdi: aye, Kerls: aye. VOTE: 7-0.