

## **The Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Advisory (IDEA) Committee**

**May 5, 2021 - 7:00pm**

Zoom Meeting: Online

*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor's Orders imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, no in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted at this meeting. Board members may be participating remotely. For public hearings, access via Zoom is provided for the required opportunity for public participation.*

***Committee Members Present:*** Khalid Abdi, Marques Crosby, Susan Dietrich, John Foresto, Dan Kerls, William Kingsbury, and Brian Sharkey

***Committee Members Absent:*** Andrea Crow Henry and Judith Lane

***Others Present:*** None

**Call to Order:** Mr. Foresto called the meeting to order at 7:34PM.

### **Agenda Item #1: Team Introductions**

Mr. Foresto began the meeting by stating that the Select Board created this committee. Then he offered to lead the meetings until the committee appoints a chair and vice chair. Lastly he thanked each committee member for joining, especially given the difficulty and complexity of the committee's charge.

### **Agenda Item #2: Committee Structure and Selection of Team Leadership**

From there, Mr. Foresto clarified the roles and responsibilities of team leadership. He stated that the chair is responsible for being consistently present, setting the agendas, handling the timing, and ensuring that the minutes are posted correctly. He also discussed the committee's structure: he stressed how the committee must avoid chain-style communication and never meet in a group that constitutes a quorum.

At this point, Mr. Foresto asked the committee to consider why they are each here and why the committee is important to them. Secondly, he asked them to ponder what they each expect to get out of this experience and what their vision is in terms of end-results. He began by sharing that he feels this work is important and that he looks forward to meeting with people who have different worldviews. Additionally, he stated that he hopes to make Medway more friendly and likeable, as well as more alluring to future black and brown residents.

Next, Mr. Kingsbury contributed that he was asked to join this committee after his previous experience with the Medway March for Justice. He shared that he has had an insular view of law enforcement, due to his profession, and hopes to hear from others regarding what they would like to see from law enforcement moving forward.

Mr. Crosby contributed next, articulating that he would like to ensure that Medway is a welcoming and diverse environment for his family. Furthermore, he also stated that he would like to learn more from others, such as the LGBTQ community, indigineous people, and individuals with handicaps.

Next, Mr. Kerls shared that he has experience working with people with disabilities, which lends itself to this role. Moreover, he added that he grew up in a more diverse environment than his children, so he hopes to find more opportunities for his children to engage with people of varied backgrounds.

Mr. Sharkey built off Mr. Kerls's point, stating that his primary reason for joining the committee is his children, as well. His goal is to identify and consequently bridge the gap in the experiences of children of all backgrounds in Medway. He shared that he has learned a significant amount on the topic through diversity forums and hopes to continue building his knowledge.

Mr. Abdi shared that he is a first-generation Somali-American who has lived all over the world and has experienced many culture clashes. He provided an example of this, which was his childhood in Brockton juxtaposed with his undergraduate career one town over in Easton. He also stated that previous frustrations have led him to consider moving out of Medway; however, he hopes to be part of the movement towards positive change by joining this committee.

Ms. Dietrich shared that she grew up in California in a highly diverse community, which she contrasted with Medway. She also said that her role in the school system, especially in conjunction with their ongoing equity assessment, led her to join this committee. Furthermore, she also stated that her experience at the food pantry has a similar focus and mission as the IDEA committee: establishing a sense of welcoming, respect, and equality.

### **Agenda Item #3: Discussion: How do we move forward?**

Mr. Foresto brought up the idea of establishing hard data to inform how the committee should move forward. He suggested that the committee speak to many departments and individuals in the town. For example, he referred to town administration, school administration, police, affordable housing, council on aging, student groups, business council, Medway churches, and underrepresented community members. He suggested the committee assign members to be responsible for speaking to particular groups.

Mr. Crosby asked whether these would be general, umbrella-style conversations or if they would be more tailored to particular groups. Mr. Foresto predicted that some conversations will likely be more straightforward than others. Mr. Kingsbury shared that the police ran into challenges identifying focus groups of underrepresented individuals.

Mr. Sharkey shared that he has experience with data collection and suggested that the committee identify an underlying question, organizing sample groups that are representative of all groups and individuals, conducting qualitative interviews, and creating a quantitative online survey. Mr. Kingsbury asked if anyone was aware of other communities who did similar surveys, to which Mr. Kerls replied that his company did a comparable one.

Ms. Dietrich shared that she attended a roundtable discussion with other towns who are doing similar work and suggested the committee reach out to them. Mr. Crosby and Mr. Sharkey strongly agreed with the idea to reach out to other towns. Mr. Crosby also discussed potential sites and resources for creating the survey. He then brought up the option of asking survey respondents if they would like the committee to contact them, which could be part of the qualitative interviews.

Mr. Crosby asked if the committee will create the lists of underrepresented groups or if the survey and conversations will inform that decision. Mr. Foresto responded that it will be a combination of both. Mr. Abdi said that there is a marked lack of demographic data in Medway; specifically, the most recent data is from 2018-2019. Mr. Foresto shared that the Master Plan Committee plans to do a demographic profile of the town today, as well as projections for 10 years from now.

Ms. Dietrich said that there will likely be significant overlap between a current focus group survey in the school system with the IDEA committee's survey. She suggested that the current participants could be points of contact for the IDEA committee. She also returned to the overarching question of what the committee is trying to find out, as well as what the committee will do with that information. She also shared that Canton's committee is 8-9 months into similar work, so it would be helpful to see what their approach was, especially in the early stages.

In response, Mr. Sharkey suggested starting by aligning the committee's objectives and working backwards from there. He offered to draft a proposal of high-level objectives regarding Medway's current state and its unique needs.

At this point, Ms. Dietrich brought up that there is a formal written mandate of this committee, which should therefore be incorporated into the committee's work. Mr. Foresto shared that the committee's mission and information will be on the Medway website as of tomorrow.

Then Ms. Dietrich asked how community members will be able to reach the committee, to which Mr. Foresto replied that the committee needs to create a mailbox, dropbox, or central email address. Ms. Dietrich asked if the committee should be reached as one entity or if each member should be available for contact. Mr. Kingsbury suggested that there also be an option for individuals to remain anonymous in their communication with the committee. Mr. Foresto and Ms. Dietrich both confirmed that these communications would technically be public record. Mr. Abdi stated that one generic mailbox would be ideal. Mr. Foresto seconded this and confirmed with the committee members that this approach is acceptable.

Mr. Crosby raised the idea of an anonymous tip line, which Mr. Kingsbury felt would be doable, based on his previous experience doing so with the police department.

#### **Agenda Item #4: Assignment of Roles and Responsibilities**

Mr. Foresto reiterated that this committee is a 14-15 month undertaking. He proposed that the committee meet again in 2 weeks. The committee agreed that their next meeting will be Tuesday, May 25 at 7:30pm.

Mr. Foresto confirmed that he will speak to his associate about other towns' progress in this area, as well as reach out to his other associate regarding demographic information. Additionally, he stated that he will confirm the town website has accurate information and that the committee has an email address in the near future. Mr. Sharkey confirmed that he will share his drafted proposal presentation with the committee prior to the next meeting. Mr. Crosby said that he will also reach out to his contacts in surrounding towns, such as Walpole. Mr. Foresto mentioned that at the next meeting, the committee will discuss the assignment of roles.

**At 8:09PM, Ms. Dietrich motioned to adjourn. Mr. Foresto seconded this motion. It was voted by roll call: Adbi aye; Crosby aye; Dietrich aye; Foresto aye; Kerls aye; Sharkey aye; Vote: 6-0-0.**