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Gary Christenson, Mayor

Racial Equity Commission Minutes of April 27, 2023

Meeting called to order at 6:06

Members participated either in person (City Hall Room 105, Malden City Hall) or on Zoom.

Committee Members Present:

Present: Abraham Ndiwane, Cassandra Davis, Ralph Long, Janne Shahan, Nate Bae Kupel, James Song, Brian Vences, Meklit Abel, City Councillor Carey McDonald, Language Access Coordinator Elena Martinez; and Maria Luise, Mayor's Office.

Follow-up discussion about the presentation by CHA relative to the data collected for the recently released 2022 Regional Wellbeing Report: A Community Health Needs Assessment:

Renee Cammarata Hamilton, from Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) was present for the beginning of the meeting to answer any further questions of the group from the information presented at the last session.

Renee was asked if there were any areas that emerged from the assessment that were surprising. She explained that in looking at the four focus areas, the results were not so surprising especially in the areas of housing, food security, equitable economies and equity and access to care (health). The area that came to the forefront in many of the communities was climate health and justice. She also commented that when considering the magnitude of the needs, it was important to look at Malden's resiliency which was strong.

Councillor McDonald asked if there were areas of urgency for the Commission to focus on. Renee mentioned the Equity Principles discussed at the last meeting provide a focus: language justice, including underrepresented voices in leadership and decision-making and promoting collective care and healing. We have the "what," but perhaps the need is to focus on the "how;" creating a framework with criteria for a plan.

Before Renee left the meeting, there was also a question about whether given the data there were priority areas that the Commission could focus on and come up with deliverables. As far as time frame, she emphasized that the work is long term. CHA's Well-Being Assessment is on a 3-year cycle that includes: revisiting the work, carrying out the implementation plans and measuring success.

Approval of the Minutes:

Nate moved to approve the **Minutes of August 25, 2022**, seconded by Brian and there were no objections. All were in favor and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

Brian moved to approve the **Minutes of January 12, 2023**, seconded by Abraham and there were no objections. All were in favor and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

Janne moved to approve the **Minutes of March 8, 2023**, seconded by Cassandra and there were no objections. All were in favor and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

New Business:

Discussion about the Commission as a group and its role, the selection process for a chairperson:

The group discussed the 18-month timeline and when it actually started as well as the parameters of the Commission's work. There was a discussion about the resolution adopted by the City Council and whether it could be amended as far as time and scope. Councillor McDonald is serving as the liaison of the City Council and will help support the Commission and the direction they want to go. When the group has a clear sense of the timeline and what they want to accomplish, bringing it before the Council would be helpful.

The group felt extending the timeline and completing the Mission Statement was important. They also discussed the selection of a Chair and Councillor McDonald suggested choosing the Chair for the next meeting and then rotating chairs moving forward. Maria also reported that she is working with HR to fill the DEI position that is currently vacant. The hope is to have someone in place before the summer.

Identifying goals, timelines and next steps and actions:

Councillor McDonald commented that it may be helpful to do an Interim Report to the Council that includes a recap of where we are as far as doing the work while acknowledging the work already being done in the community through various groups and resources.

Janne discussed perhaps having phases, first creating the infrastructure and then setting a plan. This would take the group through the first part of the timeline. The second phase could involve new members of the Commission or the same members who would focus on carrying out the plan. Here was discussion about setting the deliverables for the next group and working backwards into a timeline from June 2024.

There was also discussion about the need to identify the scope of work and define the project. What is the end goal and how does REC make an impact? Nate explained that the original idea had been for a community driven commission that could better inform City Government about services, access to services, disparities, racial disparities and also raise awareness. It was also to create a platform from which work can evolve.

The group also talked about hearing from more community voices in addition to CHA. There are groups that already do this work in the community, perhaps hearing from them and other community leaders. A consultant, in conjunction with the DEI Coordinator, would be a helpful resource to help synthesize all the information collected and then assist with a prioritization process. We can set up meetings with different groups and hear from them as well as reach out to the community at large about attending our meetings.

Next Steps:

- Phase 1. In the next few months (through the summer): Clarify the mission, establish a scope of work to go out to bid and hire a consultant.
- Phase 2. Bring other community groups before the Commission to hear about their work (and promote these meetings widely).
- Phase 3. Engage in more asset mapping and evaluating how well the resources are performing, and also work with the consultant to synthesize the information collected and prioritize areas of work.
- Phase 4. Presenting a report to the Council with recommendations of areas that need work or more investment.

The suggestion was made to use an asset mapping tool kit. There was also a discussion about a possible survey and the creation of a communication strategy.

Nate and Abraham volunteered to Chair the next meeting. The mission statement and timeline will be a priority and should incorporate some of the items discussed at this meeting.

Adjournment at 8:06PM.

Next meeting: May 25, 2023