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Gary Christenson, Mayor

Racial Equity Commission Minutes of May 25, 2023

Meeting called to order at 6:11

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

Committee Members Present:

Co-Chairs Nate Bae Kupel, Abraham Ndiwane

Participants: Ralph Long, Brian Vences, James Song, Bwann Gwann, Carey McDonald

Observers: City Councillor Karen Colon Hayes

1. **Roll Call, Approval of Minutes**
 - Ralph moved, Brian seconded, minutes unanimously approved from April 27
2. **Reviewing the Mission Statement**
 - After reviewing the previously drafted mission statement, the members discussed possible changes.

Mission: We, the Racial Equity Commission strive to cultivate and support diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our goal is to collect, analyze and evaluate demographic data on the impact of racial injustices in our community. This includes language access, public health, mental health and wellbeing, employment, economic mobility, and education. We will make recommendations to the City Council and the Mayor for policy and decision-making, procedures, and programs to address these impacts and needs.

Who We Are: We are a diverse group of students, business owners, educators, researchers and community leaders. Our diversity of race, age, gender and experiences demonstrates the breadth of our beloved community.

Vision: We aspire to create a vibrant, culturally diverse Malden in which people of historically marginalized racial and ethnic identities have a greater sense of belonging and inclusion. We should all have equitable access to resources, opportunities to grow and thrive, and representation in community decision-making. We believe that those who are impacted by racial injustices must have a seat at the table to amplify their voices, stories and lived experiences. Our diversity is our strength in addressing systemic inequities, and our commitment to belonging is the path forward.

Brian moved, Abraham seconded, and the members unanimously approved the revised Mission Statement.

3. **Process for extension**

- Councillor McDonald, as the Council's liaison, will submit a resolve to the Council that asks for affirmation of the timeline and plan for the REC

4. **Grant funding**

- Up to \$75,000 available in unspent federal grant funds

5. **Plan for REC's work**

- Host town hall meetings and panel discussions, including translation/interpretation, meals for attendees and honoraria for participants; these would surface needs and ideas from members of the community; could potentially start in June
- Ask a consultant to provide a qualitative review of information gained from town hall meetings; these results will inform the REC's recommendations and final presentation to the City Council
- Abraham asked if there are options for ways to utilize expertise that is already a part of the city staff? Nate notes it's also good to get an outside perspective
- Carey says we need a DEI coordinator in place to work with the consultants and plan for the town hall meetings
- Nate asks about pushing the timeline back from June, and Brian agrees; Could contract with a consultant to help design and manage the town hall meetings, based on priorities from data received from Cambridge Health Alliance and other conversations with the REC
- Bwann says may need to contract with a consultant first to get the process started
- Carey recommended reaching out to the former Malden CORE and GMAACC to see what they've gotten out town halls on racism in the past, which should inform where to start the conversation now
- Each town hall may have a different topic or focus, want to make the most of them
- Nate/Abraham proposes scope of work for consultant:
 - Review existing data (CHA, etc.) and past experience of community groups engaging racism Malden
 - Work with REC to design and plan town hall meetings, with a focus on 2-4 key priorities
 - Analyze conversation and feedback received from town halls, alongside other demographic data; meet with other city staff and leaders to interview them
 - Audit Malden's work in the 2-4 key priority areas, and make recommendations for best practices going forward

6. **Potential timeline**

- Carey suggested the following timeline for REC meetings for engaging a consultant
 - June – review and approve scope of work for consultant RFPs
 - July – approve RFP responses, select a consultant
 - August – kickoff meeting with consultant, present existing data
 - September – plan for town hall meetings
- Bwann says it would be good to start getting the word out about the REC's work to build excitement heading into the fall; what is the time expectation for REC members in the coming months?
- Abraham notes the work of whoever is chairing the next meeting; there may be homework for REC members between meetings
- Nate says that until we have more staff in place, we'll have to work with the capacity we have as volunteers
- Carey agreed to work with Bwann and Ralph to draft a scope of work (maybe Cassandra too?)
- Nate and Abraham will revise the project plan

7. **Next meeting is June 22; Bwann and Brian will connect with Maria about the next agenda**

8. Carey reviewed the following draft resolve to get Council approval to extend the timeline, and the members supported this language.

Resolved: It is the sense of the City Council that they support and affirm the plan and timeline of the Racial Equity Commission to engage a consultant, host town hall community meetings, and review demographic data and the past history of racial equity efforts in Malden. The REC will plan to deliver its final report and recommendations to the City Council and the Mayor in the Fall of 2024, no later than December 2024.

Brian moved, Ralph seconded, and the members unanimously approved a motion to adjourn at 8:06 pm.

Adjournment at 8:06PM.