RIVER FOREST
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING AGENDA

A meeting of the River Forest Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group will be held on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 from 7:00-9:00 P.M. in Room 107 in Parmer Hall at Dominican University, 7900 W. Division Street, River Forest, Illinois.

Physical attendance at this public meeting is limited to 50 individuals, with DEI Advisory Group officials, staff and consultants having priority over members of the public. Public comments and any responses will be read into the public meeting record. You may submit your public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: Lisa Scheiner at lscheiner@vrf.us. You may view or listen to the meeting by participating online or via telephone. Join the meeting at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88029631372, or call (312) 626-6799 and use meeting ID 880 2963 1372. If you would like to participate online or over the phone, please email lscheiner@vrf.us by 4:00 PM on the day prior to the meeting with your name and the last four digits of the phone number you will be using to call in.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

II. Approval of Minutes of the August 2, 2021 DEI Advisory Group Meeting

III. Public Comment

IV. Small group discussion

V. Unfinished Business

    a. Continued Consideration and Approval of Amended Definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

VI. New Business

    a. Consideration of Request to Begin Meetings with Pledge of Allegiance

    b. Presentation: Village of River Forest Overview

    c. DEI Goals and Responsibilities

VII. Confirmation of Next Meeting Dates:

    a. 1st Monday: September 6, 2021 – CANCELLED DUE TO LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

    b. 3rd Tuesday: September 21, 2021

VIII. Adjournment

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 2, 2021

A meeting of the River Forest Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (DEIAG) was held on Monday, August 2, 2021 from 7:00-9:00 P.M. in the Room 107 in Parmer Hall at Dominican University, 7900 W. Division Street, River Forest, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Members Austin, Baird, Bonner, Credi, DeSorbo-Quinn, Duba-Clancy, Garcia-Luce, Grant, Hartshorn, Johnson, Kang, Keskitalo, Kirk, McAdams, Navarro, Nicholas, Norman, Rogers, Shea, Weissenberger, Yoon, and Chairpersons Bachner, Johnson, and Scheiner

Absent: Members Addy, Arauz, Brandhorst, Burkett, Economos, Foster, Graham, Herrman, Iverson, Kang, Khaledan, Kreisman, Macaulay, Oates, Papirnik, Peavy, Richetti, Riley, Schumacher, Simon, Szerszenowicz-Olweny

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

III. JUNE 22, 2021 MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Weissenberger and SECONDED by Grant to approve the amended June 22, 2021 minutes of the DEI Advisory Group. On voice vote, motion passed.

IV. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

None.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Continued discussion regarding the definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

A MOTION was made by Rogers and SECONDED by Credi to approve the definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Members of the working group in attendance at the meeting discussed their recommendation for amendments to the definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. They stated that the working group reached consensus regarding their definitions of diversity and inclusion and they relied upon definitions from GARE, PTA, and other sources when drafting these definitions. The document distributed to the Advisory Group members included two definitions of equity because the majority of working group members supported the first definition but one did not. There was a long discussion regarding these definitions.

A MOTION was made by Weissenberger and SECONDED by Grant that language be inserted into the definitions stating that these are working definition subject to revision as they proceed. There was a long discussion regarding the motion.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Desorbo-Quinn, Grant, Johnson, Johnson, Kirk, McAdams, Nicholas, Norman, Weissenberger, Yoon

Nays: Austin, Bachner, Baird, Bonner, Credi, Duba-Clancy, Garcia-Luce, Hartshorn, Keskitalo, Navarro, Rogers, Scheiner, Shea

Motion Failed.

A motion was made and seconded to table the approval of the definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. On voice vote, motion passed.

VI.   NEW BUSINESS

None.

VII.   ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by and SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. On voice vote, the motion passed.

_____   _____

Erika Bachner   Date
Chairperson

_____   _____

Ken Johnson   Date
Chairperson

_____   _____

Lisa Scheiner   Date
Chairperson

Diversity is a Fact. Diversity is the ~~representation of individuals within a group (i.e.: workplace, community, etc.) across different~~ psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among ~~any and all~~ individuals <u>and groups</u>~~;~~. <u>Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. This can</u> includ<u>e</u>~~ing~~ but <u>is</u> not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, <u>residency status, location, immigration status,</u> gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and ~~learning styles~~<u>physical appearance</u>. <u>Diversity involves bringing different ideas, perspectives, lived experiences, and worldviews to the table. To embrace diversity is to seek out and learn from a diverse set of perspectives, skills and experiences, and staying open to the unfamiliar.</u>

~~**Original Definition: Equity**~~ - Provides the resources needed for everyone to have the same opportunities to succeed within a given environment. The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

Proposed Amended Definition: Equity - <u>Equity is a commitment. Equity means the active commitment to achieving consistent, comparable favorable outcomes across racial, ethnic and diverse groups through the allocation of resources in ways designed to remedy disadvantages some people face through no fault of their own. Equity is a process, the outcome of which must be evident in all aspects of government operations: forming or executing public policy, distributing public services, and managing all institutions serving the public directly or by contract.</u>

<u>As an outcome, we achieve equity when those aspects listed in diversity (such as race, gender, age, LGBTQ status, immigration status, etc.) no longer eliminated and outcomes for all groups are improved.</u>

<u>The process of equity requires assessment of the root causes of disparities that groups within our community experience in attaining the aspirational outcomes our community extols such as education, prosperity, resilience, health and affordability. As a process, equity requires the voices and concerns of those who face the impact of inequality to be centered and integral in helping to create and implement institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.</u>

<u>Equity implies that an individual may need to experience or receive something different (not equal) in order to maintain fairness and access. For example, a person with a wheelchair may need special access to an elevator relative to someone else.</u>

Inclusion is a Choice. <u>Inclusion is t</u>~~T~~he intentional act of creating environments in which an individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. <u>Inclusion involves O</u>~~o~~ngoing engagement with diversity – in people and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase one's awareness, content knowledge, ~~cognitive sophistication, and~~

~~empathic~~ empathy and understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions. Inclusion is putting diversity into action which means actively seeking out and centering voices that have been traditionally underrepresented and/or marginalized, as well as the voices of those directly/most impacted by a particular policy or practice. Inclusion recognizes that the perspectives and input of these individuals are fundamental to the process of achieving equity.

DEI Definition Working Group

Background

- 6/7/21: First meeting of DEI Advisory Group

  - The purpose of the DEIAG is to develop a diversity, equity and inclusion initiative for the Village

  - The mission of the DEIAG is to remove barriers that prevent the participation, engagement and an equitable and welcoming environment for all our residents, business members, visitors, employee in municipal services, community and civic engagement, and in doing so, build trust amongst all parties

Background

- Responsibilities include assessing the Village as a municipal organization to provide an equity analysis of its practice, policies, systems and structures to identify potential unintended consequences

- Following assessment, review the items that have been identified and develop a short and long term plan and process for reviewing and making recommendations to reform current Village practices, policies, systems and structure

Background

- 6/22/21 Meeting: DEIAG has been charged with the responsibility of providing a definition for the terms "diversity," "equity" and "inclusion."

  - Chairpersons propose definitions which were reviewed but he Chief Diversity Officer at Dominican University

  - Discussion whether the definition of equity should be centered around opportunity, or impact and outcome, or fairness another language issues

  - Consensus had not been reached; working group formed to provide suggestions for possible revisions to the definitions

  - All members of the DEIAG were invited to provide suggestions regarding the definitions via e-mail to the chairperson(s)

Working Group Suggestions

- Reviewed background information from groups in the local government space

- Edits to promote consistency in structure and internal consistency among definitions

- Key themes discussed included centering voices of those impacted in the process, consideration of the definitions in the context of the Village, and the community benefits to DEI

Diversity

- Diversity is a Fact. Diversity is the psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among individuals and groups. Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. This can include but is not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, residency status, length of residency, housing status, location, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and physical appearance. Diversity involves bringing different ideas, perspectives, lived experiences, and worldviews to the table. To embrace diversity is to seek out and learn from a diverse set of perspectives, skills and experiences, and staying open to the unfamiliar.

- NOTE: Incorporated residency status based on DEIAG discussion

- Guideline intended to portray the concept of diversity dynamically, not as a static differentiator.

Equity

- Equity is a commitment. Equity means the active commitment to achieving consistent, comparable favorable outcomes across racial, ethnic and diverse groups through the allocation of resources in ways designed to remedy disadvantages some communities face through no fault of their own. Equity is a process, the outcome of which must be evident in all aspects of government operations: forming or executing public policy, distributing public services, and managing all institutions serving the public directly or by contract.

  As an outcome, we achieve equity when those aspects listed in diversity (such as race, gender, age, lgbtq status, immigration status, etc) no longer determine life outcomes. In other words, disparities based on diversity are eliminated and outcomes for all groups are improved.

  The process of equity requires assessment of the root causes of disparities that groups within our community experience in attaining the aspirational outcomes our community extols such as education, prosperity, resilience, health and affordability. As a process, equity requires the voices and concerns of those who face the impact of inequality to be centered and integral in helping to create and implement institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.

  Equity provides the resources needed for everyone to have the same opportunities to succeed within a given environment. Equity implies that an individual may need to experience or receive something different (not equal) in order to maintain fairness and access. For example, a person with a wheelchair may need special access to an elevator relative to someone else.

Equity

- Consistent themes among resources consulted included deliberate, directed action to reallocate resources to achieve a different result

- Proposed guidelines do not seek to address how or when equity is necessary

- Guidelines do consider why and what function equity can serve in our community

- Equity exists both as a process and an outcome

Equity

- GARE: "Racial equity means that we no longer see disparities based on race and we improve results for all groups." "In thinking about equity, start at the end." What desired equity conditions do you want to see in your whole community. "Results focus on a city … and are articulated as positive conditions of well-being. This requires you to think about the larger context— toward the transformation of systems to get equitable results for communities of color."

- PTA: "Equity provides fairness in resources, opportunities and outcomes sot hat all communities get what they need to be engaged and successful. This moves beyond an 'equal across the board' approach to: 1) Recognize and address bias and privilege. 2) Understand and attend to specific individual and community needs, providing additional resources to those with greater needs."

Equity

- National Academy of Public Administration: "The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy."

- AECF: "To achieve and sustain equity, it needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept."

- GFOA: "Unfortunately, the term 'equity' is often used loosely and without precise meaning, or explained using overly simplistic concepts that gloss over or ignore important nuances. … 'Equity' means people should be treated differently by public policy to compensate for different circumstances and consequent need for help from government. Equity is commonly associated with equality in outcomes. Equity and proportionality are not mutually exclusive. Equity is one aspect of fairness."

Equity

- City of Asheville, N.C.:"To operate with equity means there is first an understanding that everyone does not begin from the same place. Conditions, access, and opportunities differ; therefore, what is just and fair looks different based on conditions, access and opportunities. Equity looks at outcomes."

- Wash. State Office of Equity: "Equity is the process of developing, strengthening, and supporting policies and procedures that distribute and prioritize resources to those who have been historically and currently marginalized."

- City of Fort Collins, CO: "Equity A process and outcome both. Process by which policies, programs and tools are developed to ensure the elimination of existing disparities and includes inclusive engagement that leverages diversity. It becomes an outcome once a person's identity or identities no longer impacts their ability to experience equality."

Equity

- Outcomes and context are important to provide a workable guideline

  - DEIAG identified language from original definition addressing "opportunities" as important to retain

  - Recommend retaining broader context—"opportunities to succeed"… at what? Without recognition of the purpose/outcome of these efforts, the subgroup believes a definition becomes "loose," without precise meaning, and of limited value.

    - For this reason as well, do not recommend adopting "working definitions." The subgroup believes the more constructive response is to consider equity as one component of fairness, albeit a critical one.

Equity

- Commitment and process were also critical to the guideline

  - Without involvement of those impacted, how do we know what inequities exist? How do we know those inequities have changed in a meaningful way?

- Inherent in the process is an allocation or reallocation of resources in a manner that may not be strictly "equal."

- Guideline also reflects that the process of equity occurs at a broader systemic level, not on an individual basis

Equity Illustrated through Groundwater

- Sinkhole appears on one street after a storm

- Arises through no fault of the residents on that street

- Limits mobility of those on the street, creates a safety hazard, potentially devalues property

- Cost to repair street is 10x that of the Village's last drainage mitigation project

- Through an equity lens, the Village Board could approve the allocation of additional resources to remedy the underlying structural concern to achieve the same outcome of safe, unfolded, passable streets that residents elsewhere in the Village enjoy—an outcome which benefits the community as a whole (property values, trust between residents and the Village, etc.)

Inclusion

- Inclusion is a Choice. Inclusion is the intentional act of creating environments in which an individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. Inclusion involves ongoing engagement with diversity – in people and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase one's awareness, content knowledge, empathy and understanding of the complex ways individuals interact with each other, and within systems and institutions. Inclusion is putting diversity into action which means actively seeking out and centering voices that have been traditionally underrepresented and/or marginalized, as well as the voices of those directly/most impacted by a particular policy or practice. Inclusion recognizes that the perspectives and input of these individuals are fundamental to the process of achieving equity.

- NOTE: The guideline again adds language to illustrate application of the concept, not just a static definition, and to promote consistency among the three recommendations.