



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 Monday, October 4, 2021 from 7:00-9:00 P.M. in **Room 113** in Parmer Hall at Dominican University, 7900 W. Division Street, River Forest, Illinois.

Physical attendance at this public meeting may be limited, 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/85108524141>, or call (312) 626-6799 and use meeting ID 851 0852 4141. 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 17, 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. Discussion Regarding Execution of DEI Goals and Responsibilities
- VII. Confirmation of Next Meeting Dates:
 - a. 3rd Tuesday: October 19, 2021
 - b. 1st Monday: November 1, 2021
- VIII. Adjournment

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 17, 2021**

A meeting of the River Forest Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (DEIAG) was held on Monday, August 17, 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 7:07 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Austin, Bachner, Baird, Bonner, Brandhorst, Credi (arrived at 7:13 p.m.), Duba-Clancy, Economos (arrived 7:52 p.m.), Foster, Grant, Hartshorn, Johnson, Kirk, McAdams, Navarro, Nicholas, Oates, Peavy, Ricchetti, Rogers, Scheiner, Schumacher, Shea, Simon, Szerszenowicz-Olweny (arrived 7:14 p.m.), Weissenberger, Yoon (arrived 7:20 p.m.)

Absent: Addy, Arauz, Burkett, Desorbo-Quinn, Graham, Herrman, Iverson, Johnson, Kang, Keskitalo, Khaledan, Kreisman, Macaulay, Norman, Papirnik, Riley

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Bachner read a land acknowledgement statement. There was no additional public comment.

III. AUGUST 2, 2021 MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Nicholas and SECONDED by Simon to approve the August 2, 2021 minutes of the DEI Advisory Group.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Austin, Bachner, Baird, Bonner, Brandhorst, Credi, Duba-Clancy, Foster, Grant, Hartshorn, Johnson, Kirk, McAdams, Navarro, Nicholas, Oates, Peavy, Ricchetti, Rogers, Scheiner, Schumacher, Shea, Simon, Weissenberger

Nays: None

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 Hartshorn and SECONDED by Brandhorst to approve the amended definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Hartshorn and Brandhorst amended their motion to table this item to the next meeting of the DEI Advisory Group.

There was a brief discussion regarding the status of the definitions and the working group's continued efforts to address the comments received at the previous meeting.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Austin, Bachner, Baird, Bonner, Brandhorst, Credi, Duba-Clancy, Grant, Hartshorn, Johnson, Kirk, McAdams, Navarro, Nicholas, Oates, Peavy, Ricchetti, Rogers, Scheiner, Schumacher, Shea, Simon, Yoon

Nays: Foster, Weissenberger

Motion Passed.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of Request to Begin Meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance

A MOTION was made by Peavy and SECONDED by Credi to begin meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance.

There was a brief discussion about beginning meetings of the DEIGAG by stating the Pledge of Allegiance as well as the land acknowledgement statement read by Chairperson Bachner at each meeting.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Credi, Economos, Foster, Kirk, Navarro, Nicholas

Nays: Austin, Bachner, Baird, Brandhorst, Duba-Clancy, Grant, Hartshorn, Johnson, McAdams, Oates, Peavy, Ricchetti, Rogers, Scheiner, Schumacher, Shea, Simon, Szerszenowicz-Olweny, Weissenberger, Yoon

Present: Bonner

Motion Failed.

Presentation: Village of River Forest Overview

Scheiner presented an informational overview of the Village of River Forest, including community demographics, its form of government, elected officials, advisory bodies, budget, staff, and operations.

DEI Goals and Responsibilities

No action taken.

VII. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING DATES

A MOTION was made by Weissenberger and SECONDED by Credi to reschedule the September 6, 2021 meeting of the DEIAG to September 7, 2021. It was noted that September 6 and September 7 conflict with Labor Day and Rosh Hashanah. The motion was withdrawn. The next meeting of the DEIAG will be September 21, 2021.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made and SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 p.m. On voice vote, the motion passed.

Erika Bachner
Chairperson

Date

Ken Johnson
Chairperson

Date

Lisa Scheiner
Chairperson

Date

DRAFT



Village of River Forest

Village Administrator's Office

400 Park Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
Tel: 708-366-8500

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 1, 2021

To: DEI Advisory Group

From: Chairpersons Bachner, Johnson, and Scheiner

Subj: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Definitions

The DEI Advisory Group began discussions regarding the definitions of the terms “diversity”, “equity”, and “inclusion” in August, 2021. Following the initial discussion, a subgroup of DEI Advisory Group members formed to continue this conversation and return a recommended amended definition to the Advisory Group. Attached please find information prepared by the subgroup.

At its October 4, 2021, the DEI Advisory Group will be asked to approve the definitions as follows:

Diversity: 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.

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.

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.

Attachments:

- Slide deck and first draft definitions from subgroup
- Member from Glen Weissenberger re: suggestions

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 so that 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.

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 and groups~~. Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. This can include ~~ing~~ but is not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, residency status, location, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles ~~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.

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 - 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.

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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.

DRAFT

To: Definition Subgroup

From: Glen Weissenberger

Re: Suggestions

Date: September 1, 2021

Let me first express my appreciation to the Subgroup for its work on the definitions.

My suggestions are twofold: First, I think that the proposed definitions are too long; and second, the language in the definitions exceed what a definition should be. These problems are interrelated, and I will address them simultaneously.

Rather than being simple definitions, each proposed definition contains language concerning the implementation of the definition. Moreover, the stipulated implementation in each case is aspirational, thereby compounding the problem. I believe the definitions should be simple, direct and politically neutral. If the definitions do not have these qualities, they are unlikely to be supported by a consensus.

I am not suggesting that implementation of the definitions is not part of our mandate. Most certainly, the Advisory Group will make numerous recommendations regarding the implementation of the definitions, but these recommendations will come subsequently in the process.

Purely as illustrations, I suggest the following simplifications:

Diversity: Diversity is the way a group is composed when individuals or subgroups in the group are assigned varying differentiating qualities. The possible differentiating qualities are essentially artificial constructs and therefor arbitrary.

Equity: Equity is the treatment of individuals or groups in a fair manner regardless of power differentials between or among the individuals or groups.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the absence of barriers or other impediments to participate equally in a group.

Thank you for your consideration.