



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, October 19, 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/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 October 4, 2021 DEI Advisory Group Meeting
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Small group discussion
- V. Unfinished Business
 - a. Continued Discussion & Direction Regarding Execution of DEI Goals and Responsibilities
- VI. New Business
 - a. Discussion re: Equity and Inclusion Education
- VII. Confirmation of Next Meeting Dates:
 - a. 1st Monday: November 1, 2021
 - b. 3rd Tuesday: November 16, 2021
- VIII. Adjournment

Village of River Forest Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group

Purpose

The purpose of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Group is to develop a diversity, equity and inclusion initiative for the Village of River Forest.

Mission

The mission of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group is to remove barriers that prevent the participation, engagement and an equitable and welcoming environment for all our residents, business members, visitors, employees in municipal services community and civic engagement; and, in doing so, build trust amongst all parties.

Initial Goals

The mission of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group are:

- Engage a third party consultant with experience in diversity, equity and inclusion, matters.
- The consultant will design a comprehensive work plan to inform how the Village can best approach diversity, equity and inclusion (including implicit bias) in the Village's internal policies and practices.
- The review will **assess** the Village, its departments, and their practices, policies, systems, and structures to provide an equity analysis and to identify potential unintended consequences.
- Create a plan that **builds** DEI knowledge, awareness and skills among the Village employees and stakeholders.
- Partner with the Village of Maywood (Twin Villages Covenant) and Dominican University TRHT Campus Center.
- Create a working group to advise the Village Administrator and the Village Board. The working group will provide feedback for the creation of a RFP as well as review of responses. The responsibility for ultimate oversight of the program would remain with the Village Administrator.
- Develop relationships with community members, working group members, and other stakeholders to foster mutual respect and trust.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the River Forest Equity Advisory Group are:

- Assess the Village as a municipal organization to provide an equity analysis of its practices, policies, systems, and structures to identify potential unintended consequences, which includes the following:
 - Draft an RFP, select and engage a consultant to conduct the assessment
 - The scope of services for this assessment may include, but is not limited to, Review of current and future ordinances and resolutions to assess equity implications and find opportunities to minimize systemic disadvantages.
 - Review of vendor relationships, hiring and firing policies, and budgets to assess equity implications and impact.
- Based on the assessment, the Advisory Group will work with the consultant to:
 - Review the items that have been identified through this assessment and develop a short and long term plan and process for reviewing and making recommendations to reform to current Village practices, policies, systems, and structures.
 - Review and develop tools, including racial equity impact assessment tools, that Village staff, departments, boards, commissions, and working groups can use to assist their efforts to ensure equitable administration of functions within their purview.

- Act as an advisory group to carry out Village partnerships and priorities related to equity, including but not limited to:
 - Partnering with the Village of Maywood on the Twin Village Covenant.
 - Partnering with Dominican University's Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center.
 - Other partnerships as identified by the group, Village, and community.

- Act as a community resource with respect to issues of equity, including but not limited to:
 - Be a source for residents and community members to communicate comments and concerns at advisory group meetings, or in other ways, regarding equity issues in our Village and assist in the Village's efforts to educate the public about how their comments and concerns can be addressed.
 - Support the Village in the compilation, documentation, and identification of information and data relating to equity within the Village.
 - Promote and celebrate equitable relationships and opportunities and foster mutual respect and trust in the community.

- Commitments common to all River Forest working groups, boards, and commissions:
 - Operate with clarity and transparency.
 - Make recommendations to the Village President and Village Board of Trustees for adoption of policies, programs, and/or goals which would improve or sustain equity.
 - To perform such other duties and functions as may be requested of it by the Village board of trustees as aligned with the mission.

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

- 1. Confidentiality.** We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. What is said in the space stays in the space. What is learned in the space can leave the space.
- 2. Our primary commitment is to learn from each other.** We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.
- 3. Speak from personal experiences.** Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. You cannot speak for your group; just because you are does not mean you understand.
- 4. We will work with awareness of status differences within this workshop.** We recognize that there may be significant differences in professional position and power among the participants in this workshop. So, we will try in our own participation to be open and honest without endangering ourselves. Likewise, as we interact with other participants, we will support their self-exploration, but we will respect whatever limits they themselves set on their self exposure.
- 5. We recognize that there may be persons in the workshop who are in “solo status” (or nearly so) in regard to certain identities.** Because of many factors, importantly including historical patterns of exclusion and privilege, some identities (racial, gender, class, sexual, etc.) are underrepresented in this workshop. We will support them in their own decisions about how to participate; we will not expect them to “educate” others of us; and we will be aware of the patterns of over and underrepresentation in this workshop.
- 6. Do not demean, devalue, or “put down” people** for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.
- 7. Assume best intentions.** Trust that people are doing the best they can and that everyone is attempting to balance being honest, vulnerable, and imperfect with standards of perfection, mastery, and survival.
- 8. Take responsibility for your impact.** Our intentions do not negate the negative impact we may have on someone. We will hold ourselves accountable by challenging ourselves to be quick to sincerely apologize and then open to learning when we do not understand.
- 9. Challenge the idea and not the person.** If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
- 10. Speak your discomfort.** If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.
- 11. Monitor your airtime.** Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

12. **Be fully present.** Our time together is precious and limited. Everyone at the table has significant contributions to make and we need you to fully participate with both your head and your heart.
13. **Redefine the term “Safe Space.”** Conflict and discomfort are often a part of growth. Make sure to differentiate between feelings of discomfort and experiences with conflict and being unsafe.
14. **Trust the process.** The journey to our destinations offer us the chance to gain insights about ourselves and others. These insights help us grow and change and contribute to our cohesion, offering us opportunities for gratitude and appreciation on the way to goal achievement.