



RIVER FOREST DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING AGENDA

You may submit your written public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: tivansek@vrf.us A meeting of the River Forest Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group will be held on Monday, July 17, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. Our location has been changed to Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois, in the Community Room located on the 1st floor. Anyone may listen to the meeting by participating in a Zoom conference call as follows: dial-in number: 312-626-6799 with meeting ID: 852 4335 7779 or by clicking the link here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85243357779>

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call
- II. Approval of May 15, 2023, DEI Advisory Group Meeting Minutes.
- III. Approval of June 20, 2023, DEI Advisory Group Meeting Minutes.
- IV. Advisory Board Chair Comment
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Unfinished Business
- VII. New Business
 - a. Discussion of goals and ideas to be presented to the Village Board for future consideration.
- VIII. Determine the next meeting date.
- IX. Adjournment

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 15TH, 2023**

The River Forest Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group (DEIAG) meeting was held on Monday, May 15th, 2023, from 7:00–9:00 P.M. in the Community Room of River Forest Village Hall at 400 Park Avenue.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 P.M. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Austin, Bachner, Bonner, Credi, Duba-Clancy, Ivansek, Johnston, Johnson, Johnson, Keskitalo, Oates, Plywacz, Rogers, Shea, Szerszenowicz-Olweny, Herrman(Zoom.)

Absent: Kelly, Khaledan, Kirk, Oliver, Simon, Simon.

Also present: Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, Village Administrator Matt Walsh

Enough members were present for a quorum.

- II. APPROVAL OF JULY 19, 2022, DEI ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES.**
- III. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2022, DEI ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES.**
- IV. APPROVAL OF MARCH 6, 2023, DEI ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES.**
- V. APPROVAL OF MARCH 21, 2023, DEI ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES.**
- VI. APPROVAL OF APRIL 17TH, 2023, DEI ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES.**

The above meeting minutes were approved by voice vote.

VII. ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR COMMENT

Chairman Johnson recognized Fenwick students that were attending the meeting in the audience. He also reminded everyone of the Juneteenth celebration at the River Forest Library on June 12th at the River Forest Public Library.

Chairman Bachner began her comment with a land acknowledgment. Chairman Bachner commented on May being AAPI heritage month.

Chairman Ivansek stated that she appreciates committee members attending in person.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Member Credi reminded everyone that is Celebrating Seniors Month.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

- a. DEI Survey Presentation

The Village Administrator Matt Walsh gave a presentation to the committee highlighting the results of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion study the Village had completed.

Per the request of Chairman Johnson, Village Administrator Walsh gave background on the DEI Committee and survey for the Fenwick Students in present.

Member Credi asked how many employees participated in the survey.

Mr. Walsh stated 62 employees participated in the survey.

A discussion ensued surrounding the percentage of respondents participating.

Mr. Walsh wanted to state for the record that the survey provider would only provide data to the Village if at least 10 people responded in a certain department or demographic group.

Member Johnston asked if “marginalized identities” had been defined in the survey.

Mr. Walsh commented that there were some examples of marginalized identities given to choose from.

Member Szerszenowicz-Olweny asked if the Likert Scale was used for the survey.

Administrator Walsh confirmed that yes, the Likert Scale was used in the survey.

A member of the committee asked if “senior leaders” was defined.

Administrator Walsh noted that it was not defined and most likely should have been. He also noted that direct supervisor should have been defined as well.

Member Credi asked about the possibilities of similar surveys in the future.

Chairman Ivansek stated that future surveys will not be as extensive or expensive as this one.

Member Credi asked for clarification on the presentation’s usage of the word respondents and employees.

Member Credi noted being impressed with the response rate on some of the questions in the survey.

Chairmen Bachner made a motion to allow Member Herrman to participate VIA zoom. Seconded by Member Credi. The motion was approved by a voice vote.

Member Herrman noted that neutral answers during some of the questions could be seen as areas for improvement.

Member Credi asked if “fear of consequences” was defined or if any of the respondents shared specific examples.

Administrator Walsh noted that it was not defined nor were examples given.

A discussion ensued surrounding the topic of fear of consequences.

Administrator Walsh noted that the survey portion related to DEI Committee members most likely contains responses from people who are no longer on the Committee.

Member Credi asked how many people were on the DEI Committee at the time of the survey being sent out.

Chairman Ivansek reported around 38 members were on the committee.

Chairman Johnson asked for the total number of employees when combining the administration and finance departments.

Administrator Walsh stated around 11 people.

Member Credi asked why the survey company was not present for this presentation.

Administrator Walsh explained a presentation of the survey for the Committee was not part of the deliverables the Village and Nova agreed upon.

A member of the committee asked if it would be possible for subcommittees to get into contact with Nova for further discussion and clarifications on the survey results.

Chairman Johnson directed subcommittees seeking further information to the Village Administrator Walsh.

Member Credi asked if Nova will present their findings to the Village Board before the DEI Committee presents their findings.

Chairman Bachner stated the presentation will most likely happen concurrently.

Member Credi asked when/if the committee can view a red lined version of the policy recommendations Nova is making to the Village.

Chairman Ivansek stated the Village is currently updating its policy manual with the help of Nova and will keep the committee updated on that process.

MOTION by Member Credi that any changes to the Village policies based on recommendations from Nova must be made in conjunction with recommendations from the DEI Committee. SECONED by Member Johnston.

The Committee discussed the possibility and feasibility of the above motion.

Village Administrator Walsh noted that it may be premature to attempt to bind these two items together and a subsequent timeline.

Member Credi rescinded her motion.

b. Subcommittees draft ideas presented.

Before the subcommittees presented some of their preliminary findings, Chairman Ivansek laid out a roadmap for the next meetings and summer months. She reminded everyone that the next meeting is Tuesday, June 20th. She also stated the July meeting will be on the 17th of July. She noted that the August meeting date has not been set.

Chairman Ivansek stated that hopefully the committees will be able to present their findings at the July meeting and that the August meeting would be used to determine what would be

brought to the Village Board. Finally, these findings would hopefully then be presented at a September Village Board Meeting.

- Governance/DEI Framework
 - Member Credi stated the subcommittee will research how other units of government institute DEI efforts structurally while also attempting to find out what DEI efforts prove to be successful.
- Purchasing/Suppliers
 - Member Johnston reported that the group is still filtering through the documents received from Chairman Ivansek.
- Community Outreach
 - Community Outreach reported that they are still working on creating draft ideas due to group turnover.
- Housing
 - The Housing subcommittee reported that they are still working on drafting ideas. However, they shared some of their preliminary ideas such involving sweat equity and public private partnerships related to abandoned housing in the Village.
- Intergovernmental Relationships
 - The subcommittee reported that they are currently identifying groups that they would like the Village to connect with and then putting together some form of document/template used to approach the group to get consistent information back. Additionally, they noted they would like to revisit the Twin Villages Covenant with Maywood for updating.

Member Szerszenowicz-Olweny asked if Nova will be offering any advice on how to implement DEI practices that may impact the everyday life and happenings of Village residents.

Administrator Walsh stated no, but that Nova will be working on updating some Village practices that may impact residents and other people in the Village.

Member Credi asked to be on the record as saying why the committee is pushing for goals and items to be completed and presented when in her opinion, the committee currently has no quantitate or qualitative data.

Chairman Ivansek stated that it was up to the subcommittees to request information from Village Staff.

XI. CONFIRMATON OF MEETING DATES

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 20th.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 8:16 pm.

Erika Bachner
Chairperson

Date

Ken Johnson
Chairperson

Date

Trish Ivansek
Chairperson

Date

DRAFT

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 20TH, 2023**

The River Forest Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group (DEIAG) meeting was held on Monday, June 20th, 2023, from 7:00–9:00 P.M. in the Community Room of River Forest Village Hall at 400 Park Avenue.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 P.M. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Bachner, Bonner, Credi, Duba-Clancy, Ivansek, Johnson, Keskitalo, Plywacz, Rogers, Shea.

Absent: Arauz, Austin, Herrman, Johnson, Johnston, Kelly, Khaledan, Kirk, Oliver, Oates, Simon, Simon, Szerszenowicz-Olweny.

Also present: Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, Village Administrator Matt Walsh

Not enough members were present for a quorum.

II. APPROVAL OF MAY 15TH, 2023, DEI ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES.

No action taken.

III. ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR COMMENT

Chairman Bachner began her comments with a land acknowledgment.

Chairman Ivansek noted attending the Village Juneteenth flag raising event.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Subcommittees draft ideas presented.

Member Credi left the meeting due to a lack of quorum at 7:07pm.

The groups broke off and worked together for 20 minutes before returning to present their findings. After twenty minutes the groups returned to present their findings.

- Governance/DEI Framework
 - The subcommittee reported that one goal would be to consider creating a standing DEI group that would be similar to other commissions the Village has such as the Sustainability Commisison.

- The second goal would be the development of a DEI checklist to help leaders and staff to make decisions while considering DEI.
- The third goal was to share this information with other government entities.
- Community Outreach
 - Community Outreach reported that they brainstormed ways to spread information surrounding Village Services such as signs around town or emailing new residents information surrounding the services and utilizing the website to access them.
- Housing
 - The Housing subcommittee reported investigating the possibilities of the Village purchasing dilapidated properties around the Village and improving them and renting them out or selling them at an affordable rate.
 - The Housing subcommittee also suggested updating the zoning code to help diversify the housing stock in River Forest.
- Intergovernmental Relationships
 - The subcommittee reported that one goal is that they would like to research other DEI initiatives happening in the area then present them as a list of opportunities the Village Board could pursue.
 - The subcommittee also listed their second goal as revisiting and updating the Twin Villages covenant with Maywood.

The purchasing and suppliers group was not present at the meeting.

VII. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING DATES

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 17th.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Not vote taken as there was no quorum.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.

Erika Bachner
Chairperson

Date

Ken Johnson
Chairperson

Date

Trish Ivansek
Chairperson

Date

DRAFT

Dorota (Community Outreach Group)

As you may be aware, most members of the Community Outreach group resigned months ago. Since then, the group has been joined by Dionna. We had a chance to meet once and discuss some ideas that had been drafted about a year ago. Below is our proposal of what the Community Outreach group aims to accomplish.

Our goal is to make sure that the community is aware of the DEI's work and overall goals and steps. The community needs to be assured that we listen, and we will address their concerns in a professional manner. The group will focus on best communication channels, so the message reaches as many River Foresters as possible (social media, newsletter, direct mail, etc.). The group will assess the best ways to communicate DEI's progress. We will explore what channels work best for the community based on its demographics, etc.

Chris Johnston (Supplier/ Purchasing Sub Committee)

The Supplier/Purchasing subcommittee requested numerous documents from the village to determine if there were any "barriers" (per the DEI AG mission statement) preventing the "participation, engagement" of parties or entities doing business with or attempting to do business with the village.

We received numerous documents, including, but not limited to the following:

River Forest Ethics Ordinance.

River Forest Administrative (Purchasing) Policy dated November 8, 2011.

River Forest Bid template

2023 vendor list.

2022 accounts payable list

A review of the documents indicates that there are protections in place prohibiting discrimination on the basis of multiple factors, including race, color, religion, citizenship status, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin or ancestry, age, physical or mental handicap unrelated to ability, military status, or unfavorable discharge from military service.

There were no "barriers" observed preventing a person or entity from doing business or being hired or retained by the village provided they have the proper credentials to perform the work. The requirements for individuals seeking to do work for the village, or be hired for a project appeared to be easily understood and appear to properly address the legitimate needs of the village taxpayers.

Megan (Governance Sub-Committee)

Here is the document that the governance subcommittee agreed upon and presented at the 6/20 meeting, for addition to the collected subcommittee goals.

Goal 1: Consideration of the structure and composition of the DEIAG.

Overview

The existing DEIAG is likely to engage in a large number of relatively short-term projects, culminating in a final report and recommendations to the Village of River Forest trustees. What will come next?

The DEIAG Governance subcommittee proposes to research best practices within the village and in the region in order to make recommendations regarding structure, composition, and responsibilities to the trustees for a permanent DEI body.

For example, perhaps the existing DEIAG would be dissolved, and a permanent standing commission created such as the Sustainability Commission, consisting of residents and liaisons from sister municipalities and institutions. (See longer, more detailed draft below.)

Action items

- Review Village of River Forest board/commission rules, structures, appointments, responsibilities
- Identify/review best practices in communities in the region regarding rules, structures, etc.
- Draft recommendations

Goal 2: Development of DEI tools for use by village leaders and entities.

Overview No formal rubric, checklist, or process exists for making decisions through a DEI lens for Village leaders or the Village's boards and bodies. What tools might be helpful for individual decision makers? How might a DEI lens be applied more formally by boards and bodies and adopted into their decision making process?

Action items

- Identify examples and best practices in municipal decision making through a DEI lens
- Regional leaders—search for examples of neighboring communities that have instituted something like this
- Nationwide—widely adopted examples, rubrics/checklists that appear to have widespread use
- Identify rubrics/checklists to be used by an individual decision maker, and those to be used by a deliberative body
- Adapt for RF use

Goal 3: Sharing DEI tools with other local governmental entities

Overview

Once DEI tools are developed for use by RF leaders and bodies, how can RF become a regional leader? How can we share our tools and practices?

Action items

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Draft “vision statement” for Goal 1

River Forest Advisory Group submits final report and recommendations to the Village of River Forest Board. Advisory Group recommends that a standing commission be created to continue the DEI review for matters before the village. Thereafter, the Advisory Group would be dissolved.

The structure for a DEI standing commission would be 7 River Forest Residents and two student members (one from Concordia and other from Dominican). The Commission Chair would be selected among the Commission members.

DEI Standing Commission would operate within the principles of building and advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) environment within the organization. Under the guardrails of 1) Employee Recruitment, Engagement, Development, and Advancement 2) Developing Awareness and Empowerment of Diverse Groups 3) Creating a Supportive and Welcoming Environment and 4) Strengthening Community Partnerships.

Ongoing review and advisory work of the DEI Advisory Group

DEI Standing Commission would review ordinances, regulations, policies and protocols across Village of River Forest to strengthen the organization’s equity and inclusivity, and also is committed to furthering our understanding of the community’s needs and expectations that may not have been met.

1. Review and provide feedback on Village practices, policies, procedures, objectives, and goals as related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
2. Identify ways to encourage all Village elected/appointed officials, resident appointees, and community members at large to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion.
3. Promote the engagement of all voices of the community.
4. Identify initiatives for how the Village can work towards advancing racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion while also reflecting these values within our community.

Mindy (Governance Sub-Committee)

Thanks for the reminder. You and Luke both received our subcommittee’s plans. We haven’t done any work, and therefore we don’t have any recommendations.

Megan (Governance Sub-Committee)

Just to clarify where we are with goals, the governance sub-committee met during the 6/20 DEIAG meeting and agreed on goals (previously circulated to our subcommittee via email on 5/20), then presented them during the same meeting and submitted them in writing to the chairs that evening with only cosmetic edits

Mindy (Governance Sub-Committee)

My research shows there are no DEI rubrics or supervisory committees that regulate elected officials.

Therefore, my DEI AG subcommittee has no recommendations at this time.

Governance Subcommittee

Best Practices Preliminary Worksheet

Goal: research how other Government entities approach DEI efforts structurally and learn what efforts proved successful, positive, and unproductive.

Which Villages/Government entity would you contact?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Do you need a contact person's name and information?

What are the most important questions we should all ask our respective interviewees?

- 1) Please list: