



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, August 21, 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: 842 0791 4762 or by clicking the link here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84207914762>

- 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. Approval of July 17, 2023, DEI Advisory Group Meeting Minutes.
- V. Advisory Board Chair Comment
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Unfinished Business
- VIII. New Business
 - a. Discussion of goals and ideas to be presented to the Village Board for future consideration.
- IX. Determine the next meeting date.
- X. 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

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 17TH, 2023

The River Forest Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group (DEIAG) meeting was held on Monday, June 17th, 2023, from 7:00–8:43 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 7:00 P.M. Upon roll call, the following persons were:
Present: Bachner, Credi, Duba-Clancy, Ivansek, Johnson, Johnson, Keskitalo, Rogers and Szerszenowicz-Olweny.

Absent: Arauz, Austin, Bonner, Herrman, Johnston, Kelly, Khaledan, Oliver, Oates, Plywacz, Shea, Simon, Simon,

Also present: Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

Not enough members were present for a quorum.

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

No action taken.

III. APPROVAL OF JUNE 20TH, 2023, DEI ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES

No action taken.

IV. ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chairman Johnson stated he had no comments.

Chairman Bachner began her comments with a land acknowledgment and then wished everyone a happy summer.

Chairman Ivansek stated she had no comments.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion of goals and ideas to be presented to the Village Board for future consideration.

- Community Outreach

Chairman Bachner read into the record the proposal submitted by the Community Outreach Group as there were no members present from the group to present.

Chairman Ivansek stated that she felt some of the language in the proposal could be changed to reflect that it is a document for the Village Board to consider.

Member Credi stated that at the most recent Board meeting, Trustee Brennan noted the possibility of the Community Outreach group playing a role in the Juneteenth event.

Member Duba-Clancy asked how long the current iteration of the DEI group will exist.

Chairmen Ivansek noted that the Village Board would have to consider the creation of an additional DEI group once this current group disbands after their presentation to the board.

Chairmen Bachner and Chairman Ivansek laid out the timeline for the upcoming months.

Member Credi stressed the importance of posting the audio and minutes on the website so other members who are not present can listen to the meeting.

Member Credi asked if the committee will receive any items from the Nova Group prior to the items going before the Village Board.

Chairmen Ivansek noted that there is a possibility that happens, but that Nova and the Village Staff were still in the preliminary stages of discussions surrounding deliverables.

- Purchasing and Suppliers

No subcommittee members were present, so Chairmen Ivansek read into the record what the group had submitted via email.

Member Duba-Clancy asked for clarification on the Villages Request For Proposal(RFP) processes.

Chairmen Ivansek explained her understanding of the RFP process.

Member Rogers suggested the subcommittee should define the word, "barriers" in the proposal.

- Governance/DEI Framework

Member Keskitalo reported their preliminary goals and ideas.

Member Credi voiced her concerns regarding some of the language and ideas presented.

The Governance/DEI Framework subcommittee had discussions around changing some information and language in their proposed ideas and goals.

- Housing

Member Johnson presented the ideas the Housing Subcommittee generated.

Member Duba-Clancy commented on the need for affordable housing and asked if Zoning Board of Appeals would be interested in revising their code.

Deputy Clerk Masella stated that the Zoning Board has currently addressed the possibility of accessory dwelling units.

The Committee members discussed the issue of dilapidated properties and tear downs around the Village.

- Intergovernmental Relationships

No members of the Intergovernmental Relationships group were present at the meeting nor had they shared any documents with Village Staff.

VIII. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING DATES

Next meeting will be held on Monday, August 21st.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Not vote taken as there was no quorum.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 8:43 pm.

Erika Bachner
Chairperson

Date

Ken Johnson
Chairperson

Date

Trish Ivansek
Chairperson

Date

Housing Draft Recommendations:

1. **Establish a policy of preserving existing affordable housing in the Comprehensive Plan.**
 - a. *Specifically for modest income residents: teachers, retired seniors, librarians, first responders, recent college graduates, people who work within our borders, social workers, clerks, and others in fields that are not high-salaried)*
 - b. Smaller, affordable homes tend to be razed or upgraded for profit by developers/remodelers.
4. **Adopt effective incentivized inclusionary zoning** (missing middle housing - multi-family units; duplexes; town homes).
 - a. Codify accessory dwelling units, and permit smaller multi-family dwelling units via infill opportunities.
5. **Adopt the policy that at least 15 percent of dwelling units in all new developments that include multi-family housing be affordable to households of modest incomes.**
 - a. To secure the long-term preservation of affordability, work with local and regional governments and organization to provide subsidies and funding sources.
6. **Adopt a precise policy for TIF districts to maintain existing multi-family and single-family housing affordable to households with modest incomes or replace existing affordable housing.**
 - a. Maintain smaller, older single-family homes that could be candidates for tear downs specifically within TIF districts.
7. **Establish a goal of at least 10% housing affordable to households with modest incomes instead limiting it to 10% with new affordable units in new developments in the TIF districts on a one for one basis.**
 - a. Consider the percentage of households in the community that are cost-burdened, (spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing) to establish affordable housing goals/metrics.
 - b. Review zoning barriers based on parking.
8. **Create a community land trust to help assist with blighted homes in the community.**
 - a. Low equity cooperative or mutual housing association structures could provide tax incentivized funding and investment.
 - b. A program of this nature provides a win-win for our community, by improving home values and reaching our affordable housing goals.

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.

Recommendation #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.

We recommend that upon identifying a satisfactory structure, composition and set of responsibilities to the trustees; a permanent standing commission be created, consisting of residents representing a diverse cross-section of village citizens and potentially including liaisons from sister municipalities and/or institutions (like students at local universities or members of other River Forest community stakeholder groups). We recommend that this group be structured similarly to other standing commissions within the village, with a citizen chair and a smaller number of commissioners. Thereafter the DEIAG would be dissolved and this standing commission would assume those roles and responsibilities identified above within village government.

Proposed 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 to present to the Village Board of Trustees for the formation of a permanent standing commission.

Recommendation #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? We propose an examination of examples and best practices for decision making through a DEI lens, identification of regional and national examples, and adoption of DEI tools found through that analysis.

Proposed 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 DEI tools and rubrics for RF use and offer recommendations to the VBOT for adoption

- Create and maintain a toolkit or living library of adopted rubrics, checklists and processes for decision-making

Recommendation #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?

We propose that after the creation of a toolkit of adopted rubrics, checklists and processes, we explore avenues to share, communicate and collaborate on their maintenance and improvement with members of neighboring municipalities and other RF taxing bodies.

Action items

- Identify stakeholders within other taxing bodies and neighboring municipalities to partner with
- Establish communication plans for sharing DEI tools
- Establish a process to receive and act on feedback and grow relationships with stakeholders and neighbors on a regular basis

Ongoing responsibilities

The DEI Standing Commission would operate within the principles of building and advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) environment within the organization. The proposed work of the commission would foster and support 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 in all areas related to DEI, as directed to by the VBOT.

1. We recommend that the DEI Standing Commission develop and maintain a library of DEI tools that the Village Board of Trustees, Administration and standing commissions could use to review ordinances, regulations, policies and protocols across Village of River Forest to strengthen the organization's equity and inclusivity. The DEI Standing Commission would also offer assistance in those reviews as directed or requested by the VBOT or partner commissions.
2. The group would be committed to furthering our understanding of the community's needs and any expectations that may not have been met. It would operate as a forum for communicating such needs to the village by its citizens, stakeholders and neighbors.
3. When requested by the VBOT or other village commissions, the DEI commission would review and provide feedback on Village practices, policies, procedures, objectives, and goals as related to diversity, equity, and inclusion to help further the aims of those bodies and promote DEI in the village as a whole. The DEI commission would also help other groups learn to utilize DEI tools as they are developed.
4. Identify ways to encourage all Village elected/appointed officials, resident appointees, and community members at large to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion.
5. Promote the engagement of all voices of the community.
6. 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.

7. Provide a partner within the village board to DEI groups within the other village taxing bodies, other municipalities and community stakeholders to promote events, provide communication channels and offer opportunities for collaboration.
8. All other duties and responsibilities common to River Forest commissions and those assigned by the River Forest Board of Trustees.

Purchasing Draft Recommendations:

I finally listened to the 7/17 meeting and heard it mentioned that 14 days was the expected time frame that subcommittees were expected to get feedback on recommendations so subcommittees could then amend or re-work the recommendations made. I have not received any feedback in writing but heard some during the discussion addressed below.

I heard one comment asking about how we defined "barriers" and I can respond by saying that we did not discuss/provide a definition of "barriers", the terminology was simply used as it was in the Advisory Group mission statement.

There was another comment regarding "supplier diversity" or "supplier diversity" websites. I can respond by saying that we did not have anybody on our subcommittee mention familiarity with how the village might adopt a "supplier diversity" tool. If anyone has submitted more information or elaborated on this issue, we would be happy to consider it.

Finally, there were several comments about how our consultant Nova may "throw in its two cents" or make "recommendations" and/or had in fact made some recommendations.

Please provide us with any of those recommendations and any other feedback submitted as we will be happy to consider those as well.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Johnston