

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 4, 2021**

A meeting of the River Forest Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (DEIAG) was held on Monday, October 4, 2021 from 7:00-9:00 P.M. in the Room 113 in Parmer Hall at Dominican University, 7900 W. Division Street, River Forest, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Addy, Austin, Bachner, Baird, Bonner, Brandhorst, Credi, Desorbo-Quinn, Duba-Clancy, Foster, Grant, Johnson, Johnson, Keskitalo, Kirk, McAdams, Oates, Papirnik, Peavy, Riley, Rogers, Scheiner, Simon, Szerszenowicz-Olweny, Weissenberger, Yoon
Absent: Arauz, Burkett, Economos, Graham, Hartshorn, Herrman, Iverson, Kang, Khaledan, Kreisman, Macaulay, Navarro, Nicholas, Norman, Schumacher, Shea

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Bachner read a land acknowledgement statement.

Credi stated the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. AUGUST 17, 2021 MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Simon and SECONDED by Riley to approve the August 17, 2021 minutes of the DEI Advisory Group.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Addy, Austin, Bachner, Baird, Bonner, Brandhorst, Credi, Desorbo-Quinn, Duba-Clancy, Foster, Grant, Johnson, Johnson, Keskitalo, Kirk, McAdams, Oates, Papirnik, Peavy, Riley, Rogers, Scheiner, Simon, Szerszenowicz-Olweny, Weissenberger, Yoon

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 Austin and SECONDED by Bonner to approve the amended definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Scheiner read the proposed amended definitions into the record.

Foster stated he objected to all of the proposed definitions. He stated identifying groups in the definition of diversity is not necessary and objected to immigration status as a criterion. Under equity, he wanted to change “comparable favorable outcomes” to “comparable favorable opportunities” because there is no way to get results that are even.

Papirnik suggested replacing LGBTQ with LGBTQIA+.

Weissenberger stated that he submitted a memo to the working group and noted that it was included at the end of the meeting packet. In his memo he stated he cannot support the definitions as submitted because they are more than definitions and include language regarding implementation and language that is aspirational. He stated that the Advisory Group would be better served by having a succinct set of definitions that are completely politically neutral. He suggested that the following definitions be used:

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 therefore 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. Weissenberger stated that his definitions can be well understood and that he is having difficulty understanding the language and implications of the language in the definitions proposed by the subgroup. For those reasons, he stated he must vote against the proposed definitions.

Foster stated that he agrees with Weissenberger that the definitions are not succinct, contain ambiguous words, and he supports Weissenberger’s proposed definitions.

Credi stated she was prepared to support the definitions at the last meeting to go along and get along to get to the real work. She said she read an article about Cook County’s implementation of its equity mandate. She said according to an article online, the President of the Cook County Board argues that discrimination against whites is necessary to counter differences in income. She said she believes discrimination of any kind is wrong and cannot support any definition that promulgates discrimination.

Kent Kirk stated he supports the definitions as proposed by Weissenberger.

In response to a question from a member, Weissenberger stated that he did not receive a response from the chairs regarding his proposed definitions. Credi confirmed that she did not receive Weissenberger’s suggestion.

Weissenberger stated the appropriate action would be to vote no on the proposed definitions or table the motion so the working group could consider his proposed definitions.

A MOTION was made by Weissenberger to table consideration of the definitions. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Sheila Radford-Hill asked to address the Advisory Group.

Credi asked if Radford-Hill is on the Committee and Scheiner and Radford-Hill confirmed she is not.

Scheiner stated she can address the Advisory Group as a member of the public.

Radford-Hill stated that definitions should be in alignment with the Resolution that was originally passed that established the DEI Advisory Group, which came from the context of being a more welcoming community and the need to address issues of race and racism. She said the Advisory Group should be inclusive of issues related to inequity and inequality of opportunity and outcomes, meaning proportional representation, and opportunities to live, work and communicate with members of the Village in an attitude of respect. Radford-Hill stated that it is important for the definitions to be aspirational and operationalized when applied to public policy. She encouraged the committee to accept the definitions as proposed.

Rogers stated that she was part of the working group and supports what Sheila suggested. These definitions will go up to the Village Board of Trustees and this will continue to be a learning process. She supports the idea of continuing discussion and discourse. Rogers said the working group consulted several resources that include aspirational and operational language in the definitions and are in line with the standard practices among government entities across the country.

Chairperson Johnson stated that the group is in this together. There are many opinions that are not the opinions of the entire group and people need to respect each other. He suggested that members can vote against the definition.

Credi stated her objection that Weissenberger's definitions were not given to the working group. She said she also submitted an article to the Chairs that she asked be distributed. She asked if the Chairs are being transparent with the group or deciding what goes out. She asked what the transparency policy is for the group.

Weissenberger stated that his proposal was submitted on September 1 so that his work could be submitted to the working group and followed the procedure that was outlined.

Peavy stated she agrees with Rogers and Radford-Hill. She said the proposed definitions as they aimed to be as inclusive as possible and she supports the definitions as-is.

Bonner called the question. There was a brief discussion regarding the procedure for calling the question and the requirements for a 2/3 vote. Chairperson Bachner asked that the vote be called.

Scheiner advised that she had not received Weissenberger's email and those issues have been resolved. The materials were distributed to the Advisory Group in the packet for the October 4 meeting. She restated the options for members to vote if they believe the working group should continue working to revise the definitions.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Addy, Austin, Bachner, Baird, Bonner, Brandhorst, Desorbo-Quinn, Duba-Clancy, Grant, Johnson, Johnson, Keskitalo, McAdams, Papirnik, Peavy, Riley, Rogers, Scheiner, Simon, Szerszenowicz-Olweny

Nays: Credi, Foster, Kirk, Oates, Weissenberger, Yoon

Present: Grant

Motion Passed.

Chairperson Bachner thanked the working group and Advisory Group for their work on this matter.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion regarding Execution of DEI Goals and Responsibilities

Chairperson Bachner asked that the Advisory Group work in small groups to answer the following questions:

1. What do we want to do to accomplish our purpose, mission and goals?
 2. What do we want to work on?
 3. What topics do we want to dig deeper on?
- Park District - unlock basketball hoops.
 - More input from each other and community desired
 - Additional channels
 - Good data, information and insight
 - E.g. why are you here? What's your motivation? What do you want to do? How do we do this as a group or community?
 - How do you move concepts into action (i.e. actionable concepts)?
 - Suggested sharing differences w/ the community (events that celebrate diversity, maybe tying in with twin Villages covenant). E.g. sponsor a basketball tournament w/ communities' Police & Fire Departments
 - Learn more about the Village
 - More information needed about training in place for Staff
 - More community input in the group and local government
 - Set up a road map & process of next steps
 - Prep for RFP & consultant - maybe a subcommittee
 - Village info
 - Workforce analysis of Village Staff. Examine disparate impact on employees & contractors. Affirmative action planning.
 - Village employment
 - Purchasing/vendor supplier diversity analysis; Understanding vendors, suppliers, purchasing procedures.
 - Creating a sense of what we need
 - Doing better with this group? How do we better w/ experience in this group?
 - Robert's Rules training so we all know what to say and what they can/cannot do.
 - Communications training
 - More training on how to be respectful when people disagree with you (within the Advisory Group).
 - Better understanding of each other
 - Partnering w/ other organizations (DU/TRHT, CUC, Maywood/Twin Village Covenant)
 - Tax inequalities (are they being taxed fairly)? Partnering w/ Township on tax information
 - Understanding housing and existing River Forest housing stock
 - We have a housing plan; do we have a people plan? Who is in the community? More data on who is in our community
 - Identify whether there are gaps in service?
 - What makes these conversations difficult? What do we need to make this work for the community? What makes us feel threatened/vulnerable?
 - Need to feel safe

- Focus group to give residents an opportunity to answer questions honestly. Suggested a need to feel safe and use small groups/focus groups. Provide anonymous ways to express opinions w/o being labeled as a racist. Evaluate how we will get community input so we get good data, info & insight.
- “Daytime population” may not be the same as the full time residential population.
- Don’t focus solely on race and ethnicity. There are other groups within the definition (intersectionality of discrimination).
- Committee to serve as a resource to the Board and Village to ensure DEI is taken into account (e.g. decision matrix to ensure decisions are inclusive).
- More regional collaboration with neighboring communities in addition to Maywood, esp. young
- The Advisory Group needs data points – barriers to diversity.
- Why do/don’t people move to River Forest (impressions and experiences in River Forest)?
- What do people think of River Forest (perceptions of those in/out of River Forest vs reality). What are the barriers to DEI?
- Bring in community groups and diverse groups. More inclusivity of ideas.

There was a brief discussion regarding the public’s ability to observe the meeting and comment on issues on the Advisory Group’s agenda.

VII. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING DATES

The next regularly scheduled meeting dates were confirmed as noted on the agenda.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Foster and SECONDED by Weissenberger to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. On voice vote, the motion passed.

Erika Bachner

Ken Johnson

Lisa Scheiner

October 19, 2021