



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Community Relations Committee For Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Meeting Minutes

Chairman Gary St. Vil

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Hybrid Format

In -Person: Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building

Remote Participation: Information Noted Below:

Join Zoom Meeting from your Computer, Smart Phone or Tablet:

<https://ledyardct.zoom.us/j/83095809095?pwd=md72wmAqaLMb4daa5JcX698agEKyax.1>
Or by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; +Meeting ID: 830 9580 9095; Passcode: 590590

I CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Brunelle at 6:32p.m.
at the Annex Meeting Room - Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Brunelle welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the Town Council Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and members of the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website - Granicus-Insite Meeting Portal.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: April Brunelle
Ty Lamb
Adrienne Parad

In addition, the following were present:

Jeff Eilenberger Resident
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. MOTION to approve the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Regular Minutes of October 15, 2025.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Parad

VOTE: 3 - 0- Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Adrienne Parad

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Councilor Brunelle explained that although the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion does have some old business items, as they reviewed during their Organizational Meeting earlier this evening; that because tonight was the

first Regular Meeting for this newly assigned Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion all items would appear under New Business this evening.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Lamb stated that he would like to add the following items for discussion this evening: (1) Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Crossover with Board of Education ; (2) Organizations for those with Disabilities -Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Month; (3) Immigrant Community; (4) Homeless Hospitality Cetner.

❖ MOTION to add the following discussion items to tonight's Agenda:

- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Crossover with Board of Education
- Organizations for those with Disabilities - Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Month
- Immigrant Community
- Homeless Hospitality Cetner in New London

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Parad

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Brunelle stated that these items would be added to tonight's Agenda as Items: #13, 14, 15, 16.

1. Primary Care for All Americans- Framework

Councilor Parad provided some background, noting at the Town Council's September 10, 2025 meeting Dr. Fine gave a presentation on *Primary Care for All*. She stated that Dr. Fine was one of the founders of the Scituate Health Alliance, which was an initiative that made Scituate, Rhode Island-population just 10,000-the first place in the United States where every resident was guaranteed access to primary care. She stated that *Primary Care for All* would provide actual care such as: annual physicals, sick visits, screenings, and preventive services, all available for just \$10 per visit. She stated Scituate, Rhode Island was built on local leadership, and the belief that healthcare should be a public good.

Councilor Parad went on to state after seeing Dr. Fine's Presentation that Mr. Drew Chappell attended the Community Relations Committee for DEI October 15, 2025 meeting to express his interest and willingness to help with the initiative locally here in Ledyard. She stated that Mr. Chappell was a Ledyard resident and that he had some medical background noting that he worked in prehospital care as a paramedic (EMT) for fifteen years working with American Ambulance (now Hartford Healthcare); and that he also worked in the emergency departments of Backus Hospital and Plainfield Emergency Care Center.

Councilor Parad stated that Mr. Chappell has taken over the process to launch the *Ledyard Primary Care for All Americans PILOT Program*. She stated that the *Ledyard Primary Care for All Americans Committee* has met once in-person and were in the information gathering process to find out how much access does Ledyard Residents have to Primary Care, were they using it, etc. She stated with this information the Committee would work to try to figure out how to save money for healthcare expenditures. She stated that it looked like Ledyard would be a subgroup of the National Organization; "Primary Care for All Americans" which has a 501(c) non-profit status. She stated the *Ledyard Primary Care for All Americans Committee* has been vibrant on-line with social media, etc.

Councilor Lamb stated that reviewed Dr. Fine's PowerPoint Presentation and that he thought *Primary Care for All Americans* was a great initiative, noting that the healthcare system in America had to be fixed. He stated that he would like to see their local leaders work with their State Representatives to reform health insurance.

Councilor Parad suggested Councilor Lamb watch the video from the Town Council's September 10, 2025 meeting, at which Dr. Fine gave an informative presentation.

RESULT: CONTINUE

2. Develop a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council to help foster communication and mutual points of interest.

Councilor Brunelle provided some background noting that the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion has had this item on their agenda, noting that former Town Council Chairman Naomi Rodriguez had been communicating with some members of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council. She asked whether Councilor Parad or Councilor Lamb would like to volunteer to be their spokesperson, noting that she did not have a problem with taking on that role, if they were not interested.

Councilor Lamb stated that he believed it was important to have a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. He stated that he thought the town should have a relationship with all of the Indian Tribes in their area including the Eastern Pequot Tribe, and the Mohegan Tribe. He stated that he was 1,000% behind communicating with all of the Tribes in their area and to find win-win opportunities with them.

Councilor Lamb stated that the Board of Education had to have a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe for legal purposes. Therefore, he questioned the town's goal to develop a relationship with the Tribe. Councilor Brunelle explained that the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion goal was to serve as an Ambassador to foster communication.

Councilor Lamb stated the Historic District Commission has been communicating with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe; and he questioned whether the Commission could continue to do that. Councilor Brunelle stated that the Historic District Commission could continue to communicate with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe.

Mr. Jeff Eilenberger, 2 Village Drive, Ledyard, noted that the Town was currently in Federal Court with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN) because they were looking to Annex up-to 5,000-acres in the Town of Ledyard. Therefore, he questioned whether the Mayor was aware that the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion was communicating with the Tribe.

Councilor Brunelle noted that Mayor Allyn, III knew that the Committee has had this item on their Agenda for a long time; and that former Town Council Chairman Rodriguez was communicating with the Tribe and Chairman St. Vil attended a couple of meetings as well. She stated regardless of whether they were in litigation that she thought that they should still reach out to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN).

Councilor Parad questioned Mr. Eilenberger's concern with the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion's interest in fostering communication with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN). Mr. Eilenberger questioned how long Councilor Parad has been a Ledyard Resident. Councilor Parad stated that she has lived in Ledyard about 12 - 13 years. Mr. Eilenberger explained that there was a lot of history regarding between the Town and the Tribe. He stated urged caution in working to be community oriented because that without realizing it, things may come-up or be discussed during a conversation. He stated because they were in litigation he wanted to make sure the Town's Executive Officer was aware of the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion's intentions.

Councilor Parad stated at the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion's October 15, 2025 meeting that she had reported that she reached out to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vora about partnering with Ledyard regarding *Primary Care for All*. She stated that Dr. Vora replied stating that he was interested in helping Ledyard with their *Primary Care for All* initiative. However, she noted that this week she read in the Norwich Bulletin Newspaper an article about Hartford Healthcare and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation has formed a partnership to build a brand new Healthcare Facility, that appeared to be the first of its kind. She stated there would be some overlap between traditional medicine and the Tribe's traditional medicine as well, noting there would be a room for Drum Circles, etc. She stated because she had not heard anything further from Dr. Vora that it may have been because of this Healthcare Facility.

Councilor Lamb stated while there was history on both sides that he believed that it was important to reach out and to build trust that may lead to some joint ventures, such as grant opportunities. He stated that there should be ways for their communities to come together and find win-win opportunities. Therefore, he stated that the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion should continue to work to foster communications with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

RESULT: CONTINUE**3. Recognition of Colonel William Ledyard and Commemorate the Battle of Groton Heights.**

Councilor Brunelle explained that former Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Member Councilor Barnes suggested the Town plan an event to Commemorate the town's namesake Colonel William Ledyard and the Battle of Groton Heights. She stated that the actual sword that Colonel William Ledyard was killed by was on display at the Bill Library in Groton, which was adjacent to the museum. She noted that Councilor Barnes spoke with Groton Library Director Ms. Wendy Connell about loaning Colonel Ledyard's Sword to Ledyard for a Ceremony. However, Ms. Connell stated that she did not believe that she could just relinquish this piece of historic artifact; but if Ledyard was doing some type of Ceremony that she thought that she may be able to bring the Sword in its case to the event. Councilor Brunelle stated because of the timing the Committee was not able to recognize Colonel William Ledyard at the 2025 Memorial Day Parade; however, they noting in the coming year that there would be a series of events for the Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of their Country's Independence, and that there may be a way to tie this into those events.

Councilor Lamb stated that he attended the America 250 Planning Committee's December 9, 2025 meeting, noting that they requested the Lamb Family provide a Tractor and Wagon for the 2026 Memorial Day Parade. He suggested they use the Wagon for a display to Commemorate the town's namesake Colonel William Ledyard. He stated that he would reach out the Groton Bill Library to see if they could borrow Colonel Ledyard's Sword for the Wagon Display. He stated that perhaps they could also recognize Colonel Ledyard with some type of small ceremony on his birthday or during the 250 Celebration. He stated that he would try to reach out to decedents of Colonel William Ledyard that may be living in the area.

It was noted that Colonel Ledyard was born in Groton on December 6, 1738; and died at

the age of 42 on September 6, 1781.

RESULT: CONTINUE

4. Discussion and possible action regarding the 2026 Black History Month Program (February)

Councilor Brunelle stated when Chairman St. Vil was serving on the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion that he was the point person for the Black History Month Program. She stated that she would reach out to Chairman St. Vil to discuss the contact person for each of the schools relative to distributing the Contest Guidelines, noting that it was an Essay Contest for the Middle School and High School Students; and a Poster Contest for the Elementary School Students.. She stated in the past members of the community served as the Judges, noting that last year the following individuals served as the Judges: Library Commission Member Mr. Ralph Hightower, Police Sergeant Michael McKinney, Sergeant Matthew Andrade, Board of Education Member Mary Harris, Town Councilor Gary St. Vil, and former Chairman Rodriguez.

Councilor Lamb stated when he was serving on the Board of Education and he saw the Black History Month Contest and thought that it would have been nice if they had a Special Joint Meeting between the Town Council and Board of Education to recognize the students. He stated that this would be another opportunity for the two bodies to work together.

Councilor Parad stated in past years there were some cash prizes that were paid by members of the Town Council. Councilor Brunelle stated that former Chairman Rodriguez and Chairman St. Vil paid for the cash prizes. Therefore, she stated the Committee was going to have to talk about how they wanted to handle the prizes. She suggested getting some sponsors from some of the local businesses to provide donations to support the prizes. Councilor Lamb stated if they were soliciting donations that anyone could donate toward the prizes, noting that if some members of the Town Council wanted to donate they could. Councilor Brunelle stated Councilor Lamb was correct.

RESULT: CONTINUE

5. Discussion and possible action regarding Woman's History Month (March)

· Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award

Councilor Lamb asked who received the award last year.

Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher Mrs. Kathryn Strout was the recipient of the *First Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award*, noting that she was a dedicated volunteer and instrumental at the *Linda C. Davis Food Pantry*.

Councilor Brunelle stated because last year was the first year and they were short on time to get the initiative off the ground that some people just submitted names, and others

submitted a short paragraph about the person they were nominating. She stated that they would formalize the process this year and ask that those submitting nominations write a short paragraph about the person; and why they thought they should be the recipient of the *Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award*.

Councilor Lamb questioned whether the nominations needed to be a living person; who would be the judges; and whether there was a criteria used to evaluate the nominations.

Councilor Brunelle stated that the Award was for a living person. She stated last year all of the nominations were sent to the members of the Community Relations Committee for DEI to rank each of the nominations. She stated that the Nominations would open in February; and that last year she and former Town Council Chairman Rodriguez provided the funding for the prize.

RESULT: CONTINUE

6. Jewish Americans/Asian Americans (May)

Councilor Parad stated that May is both Jewish American and Asian American Heritage Month. She noted the following Jewish events.

- Ms. Vivan Zoe, a child of Holocaust Survivors, spoke at the High School.
- Emissaries from Israel spoke at the High School's *More Than Words Club* about combating Antisemitism; and recognizing microaggressions.
- Bill Library will host an Event on Monday, January 12, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at which Ms. Vivan Zoe, a child of Holocaust Survivors would be speaking. She stated that folks need to register to attend the event.

Councilor Brunelle noted that there was a Holocaust Museum near by and that she would look into the location.

Councilor Lamb stated that he could reach out to the Asian American Community for suggestions to recognize their heritage in May.

Councilor Parad noted that it would be great to have members in their community step-up to launch events.

RESULT: CONTINUE

7. Discuss the Foster Care Community.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she would see if she could find advocates for Foster Care to come to speak to the Committee.

Councilor Lamb stated it would be good to have a presentation from the State on Foster Care. He stated there may be empty nesters who were interested in Foster Care; noting that by having a presentation either to this Committee or to the Town Council that it could help folks make a decision as to whether they would like to participate in the

Foster Care Program.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

8. Discussion and possible action to identify various town venues to host “Informal Conversations in the Park” to engage residents in discussions regarding their concerns and their ideas for potential solutions.

Councilor Brunelle stated the Committee has used this item as an opportunity to bring the Community together to talk about ideas or concerns they had. She noted the following examples:

- July 20, 2022 - Park on East Drive to discuss vandalism to the park. This resulted in cleaning up the park, locking the gate at night, and regular Police Patrols.
- November 7, 2024 - Pickle Ball Courts

Councilor Lamb stated that they should develop a list of Focus Topics. He commented on the benefits of having face-to-face conversations; opposed to presentations or conversations on social media, noting on social media that some folks can be mean. He stated while he was serving on the Board of Education one of the Focus Topics he hosted was the exclusion of home schooled students from the Ledyard Sports Programs. He suggested the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion brainstorm and develop a list of three Focus Items. He stated finding a venue in town was easy, noting the town had great parks such as the Nathan Lester House, Sawmill; etc. He stated that he was 1,000% behind making this happen and that he would provide some suggestions about two-weeks before their January 21, 2026 meeting for the Committee to review in preparation for their discussion.

Councilor Brunelle suggested a Focus Topic could be bringing the Ledyard Fair back, noting that she has heard a lot of residents who would like to see the Ledyard Fair return.

Councilor Lamb stated there was already an Exploratory Committee that has been working on the Ledyard Fair. He stated January 23, 2026 would be their *Kick-Off meeting to Bring Back the Ledyard Fair*”. He stated everyone was welcome to attend the meeting.

RESULT: CONTINUE

9. Discussion regarding the Pride Pizza in the Park (June)

Councilor Brunelle stated they have hosted two-Pride Pizza In the Park Events, noting that last year they had a D.J., Chet’s Italian Ice Cream Truck, face painting, balloons, etc. She stated that last year the Congregational Church also helped. She stated that she would like to get a Pizza Truck this year; and that she would be working on this Event.

Councilor Lamb stated that Electric Boat-General Dynamics has a number of Committees, noting that he believed they had a Pride Committee. He suggested

Councilor Brunelle reach out to Electric Boat-General Dynamics because they had a large network and could bring Ledyard's Pride Pizza in the Park to the next level.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she would like Ledyard's Pride Pizza in the Park to be an Event that was open and welcoming to people in Ledyard and outside of Ledyard as well. However, she stated that she was not looking to make it huge. She noted that her husband worked at Electric Boat-General Dynamics and that she would ask him to get her a telephone number.

RESULT: CONTINUE

10. Native America History Month (October)

Councilor Brunelle stated that she hoped that they would have some conversations with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation before October to discuss opportunities to work together to recognize Native American History Month.

Councilor Lamb noted that he would like to talk to some people that he knew to offer this opportunity to see if they would like to partner with them.

RESULT: CONTINUE

11. Farmers Market Booths to highlight town services.

Councilor Brunelle stated in years past the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion has used their Booths at the Farmers Market to introduce residents to things such as:

- Recycling Compost Program
- Sign up for the "Notify Me"

Councilor Brunelle stated that she typically tries to reserve a Booth twice during the Summer Market. She stated suggested the Committee discuss ideas for their Booths this summer.

Councilor Lamb suggested when Councilors attend their Liaison Assignments that they should encourage their Committees use a Booth at the Farmers Market to provide information to residents about what they do in town. Councilor Parad agreed with Councilor Lamb's suggestion, noting that several Town Committees such as the Beautification Committee was already hosting their own Booth at the Farmers Market.

Councilor Parad went on to note that during this past year each of the Departments put together information to provide transparency on how their local government worked; and to help residents access the town services Departments provide. She suggested the Community Relations Committee use one of their Booths this summer to provide awareness of this resource. She also noted that they could let residents know about some of their initiatives and ask if they would like to help plan an Event.

Councilor Brunelle stated the presentations were attached to Legislative File on their Agenda and they were being uploaded to the Ledyard Academy link on the town's website. She noted the *Ledyard Academy* link could be found by visiting the town's website at www.ledyardct.org <<http://www.ledyardct.org>>; and clicking on the "**Our Community**" Tab and then clicking on the "**Ledyard Academy**"

Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher explained that the Farmers Market provides an opportunity for non-profit organizations to host a Booth. However, she stated because the space fills up quickly that they need to contact the Farmers Market Committee early in the year to try to reserve a space.

RESULT: CONTINUE

12. Coordinate and Support Town Organizations such as:

- Linda C. Davis Food Pantry
- Citizens Helping Animals in Need (CHAIN)

Councilor Brunelle stated because the Community Relations Committee does not have a budget that they could not *“Sponsor”* Organizations, however, she stated that they could provide *“Support”*. She noted as an example that the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry collects food throughout the year; however, they may need more volunteers to work at the Food Pantry. She also suggested they could have organizations give a short presentation regarding the types of donations they need, their hours of operation, and how residents could volunteer and help.

Councilor Parad suggested Organizations provide a presentation at one of their meetings noting that it would be on video and that they could play the video in the future; or residents could watch the video/presentation at a later time.

13. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Crossover with Board of Education

Councilor Lamb stated the Board of Education had a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee; and therefore, he thought that this Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion may have some opportunities to build a relationship and to do some joint events together with the Board of Education’s Committee. He suggested the first step would be for the two Committee Chairman to have a conversation regarding their initiatives to see if there were any opportunities that could be done jointly.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she would reach out to Board of Education Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chairman Mary Harris.

RESULT: CONTINUE

14. Organizations for those with Disabilities - Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Month

Mr. Lamb stated he had been involved with the Handicap Community for many years, noting that he was on the Committee that started the Indoor Wheelchair Soccer Sport noting when he was working with United Cerebral Palsy (UCP); they had Connecticut Teams that would compete nationally. He stated that he sees a lack of services for those with disabilities; and The need to break down the perception and stereotyping of those with disabilities. He stated that he would like to see what their community could do to provide visibility and advocate for individuals with disabilities.

Councilor Parad stated that Councilor Lamb had a long list of groups that he would like to celebrate. She suggested by tapping into those groups to champion their own causes that he

may be able to elevate more communities.

Councilor Lamb stated that he would reach out the Regional Community to see what they could do.

Councilor Brunelle noted in 2023 she volunteered at “Mayor’s Day” in Providence, Rhode Island. She explained the event was open to the public, noting that many families attended. She stated that Providence provided bus transportation and a free lunch for the Senior Citizens to attend the event. She stated during the event the Mayor gave a speech regarding all the things that he had been working on during the year, which included programs to help the Seniors such as services, housing, etc. She noted residents had the opportunity to talk with the Mayor, and that everyone left the event happy. She stated that Ledyard had a Senior Citizens Center; and that she wanted to bring this up as a nice thing to do, noting that the Senior Citizen community was often overlooked.

RESULT: CONTINUE

15. Homeless Hospitality Center in New London

Councilor Lamb stated that he attended a presentation at the Norwich Homeless Hospitality Center, explaining that these facilities help to provide a bridge to permanent housing for adults experiencing homelessness in Southeastern Connecticut by connecting them with state and other programs, etc. He stated he worked with an Organization in Massachusetts that started programs such as English as a second language, furniture bank, warming centers, and many others. He stated the New London Homeless Hospital Center had 44-beds; and he noted the Asset Limited Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) Report stating that about 30% of their community was living on the edge and could find themselves in need of support and services. He suggested Ledyard develop a warming center, and homeless shelter to provide beds for individuals, stating that Ledyard should not continue to rely on New London for services. He stated that Councilor Thompson worked at the New London Homeless Hospitality Center; and that he was planning to tour the Facility.

Councilor Brunelle stated that the Committee would keep this item on their Agenda for Councilor Lamb to report back on his tour of the New London Homeless Hospitality Center.

RESULT: CONTINUE

16. National Immigrant Community (National Immigrant Heritage Month - June)

Councilor Lamb noted when he attended the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion’s May 21, 2025 meeting that talked about his involvement with the Immigrant Community and Newcomer Communities, noting that his wife Brazilian. He stated that he has been involved with the Brazil Baptist Church in New London, noting that he has seen the new people who come in bring energy to the churches that had older people sting that they have revitalized the community.

RESULT: CONTINUE

17. Any New Business proper to come before the Committee

None.

IV ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Brunelle moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Lamb.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

April Brunelle

C o m m i t t e e

C h a i r m a n

Community Relations Committee

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.