



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Community Relations Committee For Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Meeting Minutes

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

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://us06web.zoom.us/j/82201848075?pwd=5ut0jw23AesyTrRScilJkFpCy9zN99.1>

Or by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; +Meeting ID: 822 0184 8075; Passcode: 139306

I CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Brunelle at 6:34 p.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 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
Gary St. Vil

Excused: Gary Paul

In addition, the following were present:

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Town Council Chairman
Roxanne Maher, Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion's Regular Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Gary St. Vil

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion and possible action draft a schedule for Public Information Forums to present to residents the types of services the town offers; how to access services and the authority residents should direct concerns regarding services.

Councilor Brunelle stated resident Ms. Beth Ribe attended the September 18, 2024 Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Meeting to discuss her proposal for the Town Council appoint a new Governance Training Committee to provide training to residents regarding the structure and operation of local government. She also noted that Ms. Ribe provided a PowerPoint further outlining her ideas at the Town Council's October 9, 2024 meeting.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that the previous Community Relation Committees invited Department Heads to give a presentation regarding what their Department does, the services they provide, and how residents could contact them if they had questions. She noted as an example that Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin gave a great presentation at one of the Community Relations Committee meetings, noting that the meeting was videotaped, and the presentation was available on the Town's website. She stated in speaking with Mr. Masalin last week that he would like to give another presentation that would be geared toward answering a number of questions residents have been asking about. She stated that Mr. Masalin stated that although he currently did not have time to make a video, that it was something he would like to do in the coming months.

Councilor St. Vil stated that Ms. Ribe presented an incredible concept and plan to provide information to residents about how our local government worked; and he noted that this Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion should move forward with her ideas. He stated in speaking with others that the best first step in this process would be to have the Department Heads present a short informational video that would be posted online. He questioned who would take the lead in organizing this effort; and whether a strawman framework should be put together to execute their plan.

Chairman Rodriguez stated in speaking with Mayor Allyn, III, regarding the Department Heads preparing and giving a presentation about the work they do, that Mayor Allyn gave his blessing for Committee Chairman Brunelle to send a letter to all Department Heads regarding their initiative to provide information to residents and to request their participation to prepare and give a presentation (video) about their Departments; which would be posted on the towns website.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she agreed with the approach to draft a letter to the Department Heads. She noted in the letter that she would like to give the Department Heads some options regarding how they would could provide their information such as:

- PowerPoint and/or Video;
- Video Only;
- Attend a Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion meeting to give their presentation in-person;
- Submit their presentation electronically to the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion;
- Presentation should include a *Frequently Asked Questions/Answer* Component.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she would like to see the presentations and videos posted somewhere online for residents to access at their convenience. She stated that she would send the letter out before the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion’s November 20, 2024 meeting.

Councilor St. Vil stated based on Councilor Brunelle’s comments that she would take the lead in coordinating this effort, including identifying an online repository for the presentations and videos to reside.

RESULT: CONTINUE

2. Continued 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
 - Long Pond on Lantern Hill Road (Showcase the Lantern Hill Waterfront Park, (2) Provide some history regarding Long Pond; (3) Provide information regarding the importance of preventing invasive plants from being transferred from different bodies of water, and (3) Engage residents)
 - Winthrop Park near the Gales Ferry Community Center (Town Council April 10, 2024 meeting Mr. Kelly expressed concerns regarding the tennis courts, pickle ball courts, engage residents etc.).
 - ***Lantern Hill Waterfront Park (Long Pond)***

Councilor Brunelle stated that she was continuing her work to schedule an Outreach Event at the Lantern Hill Waterfront Park. However, she stated with the daylight hours getting shorter that she would work to schedule something in the spring, 2025.

- ***Winthrop Park near the Gales Ferry Community Center*** - Councilor St. Vil stated an Informal Conversation has been scheduled for Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. He stated that he left Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., a voice message and sent him an email; however, he had not heard back from Mr. Johnson yet. He questioned whether Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher had spoken with Mr. Johnson. Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher noted that she spoke with Mr. Johnson yesterday (10/15/2024) and he was comfortable with the draft letter that would be mailed to property owners that lived within a 1,000-foot radius of Winthrop Park. She stated the letters were ready for Councilor Brunelle to sign, noting that the letters would be mailed tomorrow and that flyers would be mailed out the last week of October.

Councilor St. Vil noted that he would facilitate the Informal Conversation and would provide Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., a platform to present the proposals regarding the construction of Pickleball Courts at Winthrop Park; and that they would look to receive feedback from residents. He suggested the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion encourage members of the Town Council to also attend, noting that he would send an email that would include the flyer to the full Town Council about the November 5, 2024 Informal Conversation. He stated that he hoped it would be a good conversation.

RESULT: CONTINUE

3. Discussion regarding ideas to increase communication/transparency with residents.

- Ms. Beth Ribe, Governance Training Proposal

Councilor Brunelle noted this item was addressed during Item #1 earlier this evening (see above).

RESULT: CONTINUE

4. Discuss starting a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council to help foster communication and mutual points of interest.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she has been in communication with Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Councilor Crystal Whipple, noting that the Tribal Council was interested in meeting. She also noted that Ms. Whipple stated that they would like to include Daniel Meehan, who was the Chairman of their Historical/Cultural Preservation Committee. She stated that she would continue to work to obtain some dates that she and Councilor St. Vil could meet with members of the Tribal Council. She stated that she hoped they could schedule something in November.

Councilor St. Vil noted that November was Native American Heritage Month. He

stated they would need to lay out the framework to facilitate a program similar to what they have done in the past for Black History Month. He stated it would be great to engage the students in a contest to recognize the contributions of Native Americans; especially in our community.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she thought the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council would like to see a program regarding Native American Heritage Month. However, she stated that she thought that they may be running out of time to facilitate the program noting that November was only 2 weeks away. She also stated that they would need to meet with School Superintendent Jason Hartling.

Councilor Brunelle suggested if they did not have enough time to work with the schools, that perhaps they could work with the Library on a Native American Heritage Program.

Chairman Rodriguez addressed Black History Month, and she noted the importance to start the program in December. She stated although this would be an earlier start than what they had done in previous years, that it would provide the students more time to research and prepare their essays and posters.

Councilor St. Vil stated that he would like to engage the youth in their community noting that he would expect, especially in their education system, that there would be some type of recognition established through assignments or a celebration. However, he stated because this may be something new for their school system that perhaps there were others such as the Library, that this Committee could partner with and magnify. He noted Chairman Rodriguez's comments, stating to facilitate a Native American Heritage Program that it was going to require some discussions, and he stated that the discussion would need to take place rather quickly.

Chairman Rodriguez stated the next Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion meeting was scheduled for November 20, 2024. Councilor Brunelle stated that the Committee could schedule a special meeting. Councilor St. Vil questioned the reason they would need to schedule a special meeting. Councilor Brunelle stated that they would need to go over the program and to agree on; and to ensure they did not have any miscommunications like they did with the Pride Month in June, 2024.

MOTION for the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion to support and sponsor a Ledyard School System contest or some other event in recognition of Native American Heritage Month, which is during the month of November.

Moved by Councilor St. Vil, seconded by Councilor Brunelle.

Discussion: See above.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Gary St. Vil

SECONDER: April Brunelle

AYE: 2 Brunelle and St. Vil

EXCUSED: 1 Paul

5. Research Community Organizations that provide Opioid and Substance Abuse Disorder, Recovery, and Prevention Programs relative to the use of the Opioid Settlement Funding.

Chairman Rodriguez stated earlier this evening that the Non-Profit Community Speaks Out Organization presented a proposal to the Finance Committee. She noted that the Finance Committee forwarded a recommendation to the Town Council to approve an appropriation in the amount of \$10,000 for Community Speaks Out to provide services to Ledyard. She stated the Finance Committee revised the Proposal as follows:

- Remove \$1,000 for the School Presentations - Fee for Guest Speakers.
- Remove \$1,000 for the Awareness Events in Community for community education and resources including Naloxone and drug test distribution.
- Add \$2,000 to the \$8,000 for Financial Recovery Assistance to include Sober Living, Basic Needs, Recovery Activities and Recovery Coach Services (Total: \$10,000).

Chairman Rodriguez stated although the Finance Committee moved the \$1,000 for School Presentations to the Recovery Assistance line that Community Speaks Out stated that if they could get into the Schools they would give their presentations whether they had the funding or not. She stated this item would be on the Town Council's October 23, 2024 agenda.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to note that Mr. Mike Doyle, who came with Community Speaks Out, also had a different Organization, stated that he would be submitting a proposal to provide Recovery Programs. She stated as proposals come in that she would have them forwarded to both the Finance Committee and the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

RESULT: CONTINUE

6. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee
None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to set the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion's 2025 Regular Meeting schedule.

to be the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. as follows:

Community Relations Committee (3rd Wednesday, Annex Building 6:30 p.m.)

January 15	February 19	March 19	April 16
May 21	June 18	July 16	August 20
September 17	October 15	November 19	December 17
January 21, 2026			

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Gary St. Vil

AYE: 2 Brunelle and St. Vil

EXCUSED: 1 Paul

2. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee.

None.

IV ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Brunelle moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 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.