



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, January 15, 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://us06web.zoom.us/j/82803492013?
pwd=CeM9pVLqy2Of6pIMYGop7DUS7aLKzW.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82803492013?pwd=CeM9pVLqy2Of6pIMYGop7DUS7aLKzW.1)**
Or by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; +Meeting ID: 828 0349 2013 ; Passcode: 856149

I. CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Brunelle at 6:30 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 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
Gary St. Vil

In addition the following were present:

S. Naomi Rodriguez, 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 DEI Regular Meeting Minutes of November 20, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. 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)
- Visit Parks in town .

- ***Lantern Hill Waterfront Park (Long Pond)***

Councilor Brunelle stated that she would be contacting Mrs. Betsy Graham and Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., to discuss scheduling an event at the Park. She noted it was her understanding that Parks and Recreation wanted to make some improvements to the Park that would include a picnic benches, etc., before they invited residents to see the new Park.

- ***Visit all of the Parks in Town*** - No Update

RESULT: CONTINUE

2. Review status of Department Heads Government Training Presentations.

Councilor Brunelle stated that a couple Department's have submitted their Presentations.

Chairman Rodriguez suggested once the Department Heads have submitted their proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budgets to the Mayor's Office later this month, that the Committee resend the December 12, 2024 Memo requesting presentations, as a friendly reminder.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she planned to contact MIS Director Justin Dube to discuss where the Department's Presentations would be located on the Town's Website for residents to access the information.

Councilor St. Vil reported at the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee's January 6, 2025 meeting that resident Eric Treaster provided comments regarding Connecticut State Statute (CGS) 8-30g regarding Affordable Housing Regulations. Councilor St. Vil explained that 8-30g allow a Developer to bypass local Zoning Regulations to build new Affordable Housing, with some caveats which would not allow them to impose safety concerns or security concerns. He stated the Affordable Housing would have to be deeded as such, noting that the State imposes rules outlining the 8-30g Application Process. Councilor St. Vil went on to explain that Mr. Treaster had some consternation about CGS 8-30g noting that it was Mr. Treaster's opinion that 8-30g inadequately imposed undue burdens on the town. He stated during the LUPPW Committee meeting Land Use Director Elizabeth Burdick educated them on:

- What CGS 8-30g allowed;
- What local Zoning Regulations could be bypassed.

Councilor St. Vil went on to state that Ms. Burdick had a contact who was extremely knowledgeable on the 8-30g Affordable Housing Regulations; and that Ms. Burdick suggested that it may be helpful for Julie Savin from *Eastern Connecticut Housing Opportunities* (ECHO), or Beth Sabila from *The Center for Housing Equity* be invited to give an *Affordable Housing* Presentation on camera for the residents to be educated about what *Affordable Housing* was. He stated that the Presentation could be added to repository that the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion's Governance Transparency Project. Councilor St. Vil stated that during the LUPPW Committee's meeting that he noted that he would bring the subject to the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion January 15, 2025 meeting. He stated Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick would be the contact for the 8-30g Regulations.

Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher stated after the LUPPW Committee's January 6, 2025 meeting that she forwarded the Town Council's Minutes and video from their September 13, 2023, that was available on the Town's Meeting Portal at which ECHO Ms. Julie Savin gave a presentation regarding *Affordable Housing*. She noted that she would forward the video and meeting minutes to the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion's information.

https://ledyardct.granicus.com/player/clip/580?view_id=1&redirect=true

Chairman Rodriguez suggested the Committee review the video and add it to the Governance Training Tab on the Town's website, noting that Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick was not here in 2023 when ECHO Julie Savin gave the presentation on Affordable Housing.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she planned to contact the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council regarding Black History Month.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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

Councilor Brunelle stated although this item was on the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion's agenda that they were not currently working on it. She noted the town was working with Organizations to provide opioid and substance abuse and recovery programs.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that *Connecticut Recovery Support Center* Mike Doyle, who was a Gales Ferry resident, attended the Finance Committee's January 15, 2025 to present a proposal in the amount of \$10,000 to provide Recovery and Support Services to help those in their community who were struggling with opioid addiction. She stated the Finance Committee approved to forward Mr. Doyle's proposal to the Town Council, noting that it would be included on the Town Council's January 22, 2025 Agenda.

RESULT: CONTINUE

5. Discussion and possible action to begin preparations for the 2025 Black History Month Program.

Councilor St. Vil stated that emails will be sent to the School Principals (Elementary Schools, Middle School & High School) later this week to inform them of the *2025 Black History Month Contest*. He explained as in past years the program would include an Essay Contest for the High School and Middle School students and a Poster Contest for the Elementary School students. He stated last year they had great participation and a great turnout to recognize those who won awards. He stated the Contest will be open to Ledyard Students, Magnet School Students, and Homeschooled Students. He stated that more information on how to participate will be available at the Schools, and that information would be posted on the town's website at www.ledyardct.org <<http://www.ledyardct.org>>. He stated the Contest would run from January 21 - February 21, 2025. He stated that the submissions would be judged the weekend of February 21st and the Winners would be notified on February 24, 2025. He stated the winners of the Poster Contest would be recognized among their peers at their schools, and the winners of the Essay Contest will be recognized at the Town Council's February 26, 2025 meeting. He stated they were

looking forward to seeing the Student's work.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that School Superintendent Jason Hartling was aware and has approved the Black History Month Contest. She noted that Mr. Hartling stated that he was happy to support Black History Month in the Town of Ledyard.

Councilor Brunelle stated that Lucille's Restaurant in Ledyard Center would once again host a Poetry Slam. She stated that she was working with Lucille's Restaurant to promote the event noting that it was being marketed as Black History/Any Kind of Poetry Slam to get more people to attend. She noted that last year they had a good turnout.

Councilor Brunelle stated the Library will display a Gallery of Paintings; however, the Library would not be doing any Black History Month events.

Chairman Rodriguez noted in working on the Black History Month Contest that she and Councilor St. Vil also discussed having some additional events such as:

- Black History All Stars - Invite residents in the area to speak at an event.
- Black History Month at a local church.

Chairman Rodriguez stated with the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion's approval that she would like to continue to work on these two initiatives, noting that she was not certain that they would be able to get these ideas to come to fruition for this year.

RESULT: CONTINUE

MOTION to authorize Chairman Rodriguez to work on the following initiatives/events for Black History Month:

- Black History All Stars Speakers - Invite residents in the area to speak at an event.
- Black History Month Gospel Concert at a local church.

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

AYE: 2 Brunelle and St. Vil

6. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion and possible action to set a 2025 Schedule for Informal Conversation Forums and Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she wrote down the most common Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Topics noting the following:

- January - Black History Month
- March - Women's History Month
- May - Asian-American- Natural Hawaiian & Pacific Ocean
- June - LGBTQA Month (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual)
- September 15 - October 15 - Hispanic Heritage Month
- October - National Servility - Employment Awareness
- November - Native American & Veterans Day

Councilor Brunelle asked others to add to the list if she missed something.

Chairman Rodriguez suggested the Committee begin to think about the 2025 Farmers' Market, stating that the Market fills up quickly, noting that Ledyard was a popular and busy Farmers Market. She stated the Farmers' Market Committee has been working on their Market preparations for this summer; and she offered to contact Farmers' Market Committee Chairman Pam Ball to reserve a few Market dates for the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion to host a booth.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to note in past years the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion invited the Brian Dagle Foundation and SERAC to join them to provide information on Mental Health Awareness.

Councilor Brunelle stated last summer they hosted a booth on the Recycling Program. Chairman Rodriguez noted that the Beautification Committee also wanted to do something on Earth Day with Councilor Garcia-Irizarry on the Composting Program.

Councilor St. Vil stated last November, 2024 they had targeted November to Celebrate Native American Month. However, he stated unfortunately those things did not pan out. Therefore, he suggested for the Committee to be successful in recognizing, celebrating and leading activities throughout town regarding the various Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Topics, that the Committee needed to start planning at least 60-days ahead. He stated that he like the monthly ideas Councilor Brunelle suggested, and he recommended the following:

- Assign a single person to coordinate the effort.
- Look at anything within 60-days to consider whether they could be successful with a short fuse.

Councilor Brunelle noted Councilor St. Vil and Chairman Rodriguez's work on the Black History Month Contest, and therefore, she stated that she would take on Woman's History Month. She stated that she was hopeful that she could get some high-profile woman in town to help them Celebrate Woman's History Month, noting that perhaps they could have an event at the Senior Center.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that the Committee was short one member, and that once the Town Council appoints a replacement to fill Councilor Paul's vacancy that they could make assignments for each of the topics Councilor Brunelle listed this evening.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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 6:52 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.