



Chairman Gary St. Vil

# TOWN OF LEDYARD

## CONNECTICUT

### TOWN COUNCIL

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway

Ledyard, CT 06339

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Administrative Assistant

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### HYBRID FORMAT MINUTES COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-Video Conference

#### DRAFT

- 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-

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location	Arrived	Departed
Willaim Barnes	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	6:32 pm	7:16 pm
April Brunelle	Committee Chairman	Present	In-Person	6:32 pm	7:16 pm
Adrienne Parad	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	6:32 pm	7:16 pm
Drew Chappell	Resident	Present	In-Person	6:32 pm	6:45 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	6:32 pm	7:16 pm

- III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

**Mr. Drew Chappell** 14 Sherwood Trace, Gales Ferry, stated that he watched the video from the Town Councils September 10, 2025 meeting online at which Dr. Fine gave a presentation on Primary Care for all. He stated as a member of this community, that he would encourage the town to take measures to ensure that all Ledyard residents not only have access to primary care but were actively utilizing it.

Mr. Chappell noted that he spent fifteen-years working in prehospital care as a paramedic working with American Ambulance (now Hartford Healthcare). He stated that he also spent three-years working in the emergency departments of Backus Hospital and Plainfield Emergency Care Center including during the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic. He went on to state that the last six-years, he has been the primary care giver for both of his elderly in-laws (76 female, 80 male), both of whom have numerous comorbidities

which make the management of their healthcare, as well as their quality of life, difficult. He stated that he could not express the impact of primary health care on the overall well-being of patients.

Mr. Chappell continued by stating that he would conservatively estimate nearly three quarters of all EMS calls could either be handled effectively by a primary care provider or would have been prevented by preventative medicine through primary care. He stated that the Center for Disease Control & Prevention(CDC) determined that approximately 60% of emergency room visits were for patients with at least one chronic condition. The number of patients he has seen with COPD or CHF (both chronic respiratory diseases) patients who were brought in to the hospital for shortness of breath due to poor management of their condition alone was an enormous tax on the system; and it was an expensive one: nebulizer treatments, chest x-rays, steroids, CPAP or BiPAP, and/or intubation and lengthy critical care unit in-patient stays. He stated that all of this was preventable with effective management of these conditions and that begin with primary care. He stated that this was not a single example that that would not apply to the majority of their town; that they should consider diabetes, epilepsy and other neurological disorders, falls prevention, or the magnitude of the seasonal flu. He stated that all of these were mitigated or managed by primary care and they were done so without huge emergency room costs, expensive interventions, costly ambulance bills, and lengthy hospital stays. He stated that Ledyard pays for the healthcare costs frothier town employees and sub-contract their emergency medical services with Hartford Healthcare. He stated with a program such as Primary Care For All, that they could maintain a healthier community and potentially reduce the costs of two large portions of their town's budget. He stated that he would urge the town to implement such a program; and that he would be willing to volunteer his time to coordinate efforts to achieve such a goal.

Councilor Parad stated that she appreciated Mr. Chappell's comments and his interest to volunteer to help with the Primary Care for All movement. She stated that she believed that by working to improve their healthcare system; that it could help with the town's annual budget. She stated that Primary Care for All was a grassroots movement and that it begins with folks like Mr. Chappell stepping forward to get involved. She stated the reason she did not want to be the point person for Primary Care For All was because things move much slower when you have to have meetings; and therefore, she stated that she delegated it to Mr. Chappell.

Councilor Barnes noted Councilor Parad's comment that she delegated Primary Care for All Grassroots initiative to Mr. Chappell and he asked what that means; does it mean that they officially have it for the community. Councilor Parad stated that Mr. Chappell was working on a Presentation that the Town Council could decide to adopt or modify. Mr. Chappell stated that currently the Team was himself and a couple of other people, noting that have received the backing of the Non-Profits to begin to implement their own Program. Councilor Barnes questioned whether they had an idea of what the cost was going to be. Mr. Chappell stated that it was still too early to tell what the cost would be noting that he was currently working to gather data such as demographics, primary care

offices in Ledyard, as well as gather information from the Administrative Offices of Yale and Hartford Healthcare noting that manage a number of primary care offices to determine where Ledyard residents were receiving their primary care, and where the gaps in primary care lie, etc. He stated that they may also be able to lean on Ledge Light Health District to do some outreach and education in getting others to help build their Primary Care for All Coalition.

The Committee thanked Mr. Chappell for attending tonight's meeting and for stepping forward to help with this Primary Care for All grassroots movement.

IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATION – None.

IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following Community Relations for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Minutes

- Regular Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2025
- Special Meeting Minutes of September 29, 2025

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Parad

**VOTE: 3 – 0- Approved and so declared**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. 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 would continue to keep the scheduling of “*Informal Conversations in the Park*” on their Agenda.

- ***Lantern Hill Waterfront Park (Bush Pond)*** – No Update
- ***Visit all of the Parks in Town*** – No Update.

Councilor Barnes suggested the Committee develop a list of topic that residents may be interested in coming out to talk about; noting as an example that Healthcare, may be a conversation they could have at one of the town's parks.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025- 6:30 p.m.**

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

Councilor Brunelle stated that former Town Council Chairman Naomi Rodriguez was their point person with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe. She stated although she has not spoken with Chairman St. Vil that it was her understanding that he would like to take on the role to negotiate with the Tribe, noting that she still had to talk with Chairman St. Vil about this item. She noted with the November 4, 2025 General Election, that this would be a topic that they would want to forward to the incoming Community Relations

Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, noting that they would talk about “*Transition Items*” later this evening.

Councilor Parad stated that she reached out to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vora; and she noted that he was interested in helping us with their Primary Care for All. She stated that she would get Dr. Vora in touch with Mr. Chappell. She stated that the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe has their own Health Center and the Pequot Pharmacy, noting that they run all of their own healthcare. She stated that it would be good to see what elements have worked for them; and what Ledyard may learn from them.; or whether there was an opportunity to share.

Councilor Barnes questioned whether they should make a Motion to obtain Town Council authorization for further discussion with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe. Councilor Parad questioned whether Councilor Barnes was referring to endorsing Mr. Chappell’s efforts. He stated he was thinking about the discussions with Mashantucket Pequot Tribe’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vora. He stated if Councilor Parad thought that it was just exploratory; however, he questioned how far those discussions should go before they had to do something more formal.

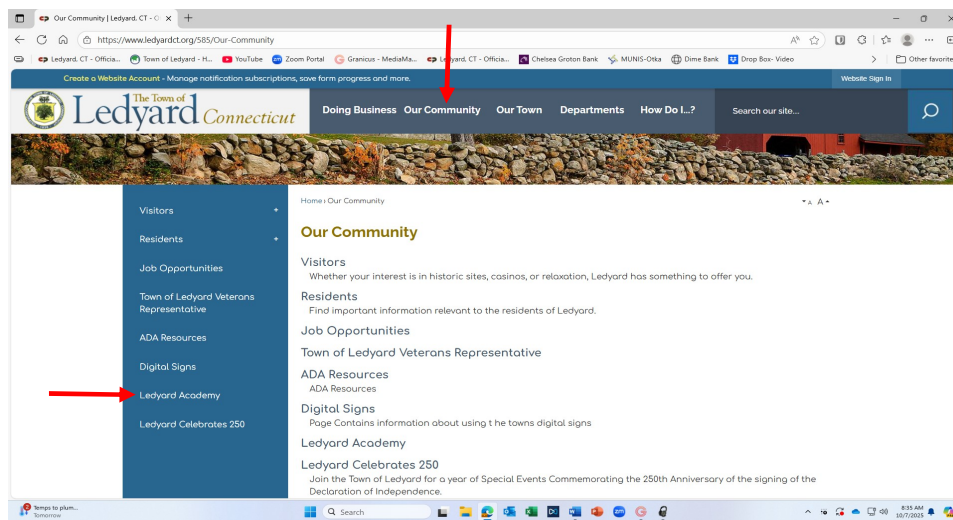
Councilor Parad stated as a member of the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, she questioned how much leeway she had to pursue a discussion with Mashantucket Pequot Tribe’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vora; and once they had their discussion, whether she would have to bring that to the Town Council. Councilor Brunelle stated that was what Councilor Parad should do, because right now all she was having was discussions; and that was well within the role that she has. She stated if they come up with a Plan during their discussions, then Councilor Parad would bring that back to the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for them to discuss. She stated if their Committee thought it was a good Plan then they would bring it forward to the Town Council.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025 6:30 p.m.**

3. Review the status of Department Heads Government Training Presentations.

Councilor Brunelle stated they have received a number of Department’s Presentations in response to Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher sending a reminder out after their September 17, 2025 meeting. She noted that 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 Academey*”



**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025 - 6:30 p.m.**

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

Councilor Barnes noted Councilor Parad's September 19, 2025 email invitation to tour the Hope House in Groton. He stated that he was not able to attend the tour and he asked about the facility and program.

Councilor Parad noted that the residents at the Hope House were transitory and that they did not require any medical care. She stated she was impressed with the facility noting that they have group counseling and do things together such as cook, and other daily activities. She stated in the basement they also had "The Kindness Connection" where residents seeking employment had access to clothing, shoes, etc., explaining that they had nothing because some may be escaping a some type of situation and they were looking for a job and to get their live on-track. She stated that the Hope House was in-need of funding, and although they appealed to Groton to request some of the Opioid Settlement Funding, that Groton did not agree to disperse funding to them. She went on to note that she did not know how many residents at the facility were from Ledyard. Councilor Brunelle stated the Opioid Settlement Funding Ledyard was receiving was to help their residents. Therefore, she stated that they would have to find out if there were Ledyard residents living at the Hope House before they could consider allocating funding to them.

Councilor Parad state that she suggested that Hope House reach out to Executive Assistant/Social Services Coordinator Kristen Chapman to see if they could work to bridge the services they provide. She stated at this time she was not providing a recommendation, but that she wanted to make the Committee aware that she did tour the facility.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025 6:30 p.m.**

5. 2025 Schedule for Informal Conversation Forums and Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives.

Councilor Brunelle stated this was something they would want to forward to the incoming Town Council to allow them to determine the schedule and topics for discussion.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025 6:30 p.m.**

6. Possible Designated Youth Fishing Waterway.

Councilor Barnes stated the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission has not met; and therefore, he did not have update to report on this evening.

**RESULT: COMPLETED**

7. Recognition of Colonel William Ledyard.

Councilor Barnes stated he did not have anything new to report this evening.

Councilor Brunelle stated that this year the country would be celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025 6:30 p.m.**

8. Continued discussion regarding the Jewish Community

Councilor Parad stated that she reached out to the Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut to talk about the specific programing they wanted to work on. She stated that they have:

- Formed a partnership with *More Than Words* at the High School; noting that they were going to have a Holocaust Survivor speak at the High School.
- Have gone to the *Modern Genocide Classroom* and they would be calling the students to learn with that.
- Working with the Library to do a Community Program.

Councilor Barnes stated the Library Community Program was like the “*Informal Conversation in the Park*” but tailor made for the colder months. He stated that he thought they could have an interesting discussion.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025 6:30 p.m.**

9. Continued discussion regarding Primary Care for All Americans.  
Discussed earlier this evening (see above).

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 12/17/2025 6:30 p.m.**

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

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Discussion and possible action regarding the transition of outstanding/unfinished business items to be forwarded to the incoming Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

The Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion by consensus agreed to forward the following unfinished items of business to the incoming Twenty-eight Town Council:

- (1) Primary Care for All American
- (2) Develop/Foster Relationship with Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
- (3) Plan Event to Recognize Colonel William Ledyard and Commemorate the Battle of Groton Heights
- (4) February - Black History Month Essay & Poster Contest
- (5) March – Woman’s History Month
  - Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award
- (6) May – Jewish American/Asian Americans
- (7) Foster Care Community
- (8) Informal Conversations in the Park (Open Topics)
- (9) June – Pride Pizza in the Park
- (10) October – Native America History Month
- (11) Farmers Market Booths to highlight town services
- (12) Coordinate and Sponsor Town Organizations such as:
  - Linda C. Davis Food Pantry and
  - Citizens Helping Animals In Need (CHAIN)

2. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee – None.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

April Brunelle  
Committee Chairman  
Community Relations Committee