



Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway

Ledyard, CT 06339

<http://www.ledyardct.org>

Administrative Assistant

Roxanne M. Maher

860 464-3203

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

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-Video Conference

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER – The Meeting was called to order by Councilor Brunelle at 6:41 p.m. at the Annex Meeting Room - Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Brunelle thanked everyone for their patience, noting that they had some technology issues. She continued by welcoming 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	6:30 pm	7:33 pm
April Brunelle	Committee Chairman	Present	In-Person	6:30 pm	7:33 pm
Gary St. Vil	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	6:30 pm	7:33 pm
Earl (Ty) Lamb	Resident	Present	In-Person	6:30 pm	7:33 pm
Jacob Hurt	Resident	Present	In-Person	6:30 pm	7:33 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	6:30 pm	6:42 pm

- III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

Mr. Jacob Hurt, 6 Nugget Hill Drive, Gales Ferry, thanked the Community Relation Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the opportunity to address them this evening. He stated that earlier this evening that he also attended the Finance Committee Meeting which was currently underway in the Council Chambers.

Mr. Hurt began his comments by noting at the May 20, 2025 Referendum that the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget was voted down, which was something that has not happened in a long time. He stated that he wanted to pass along his observation that although there was not misinformation regarding the budget, that there was missing information; and that social media turned out to be one of their residents preferred ways of getting information out. He stated that there was a lot of sort of whack a moles, where he had

Counselors and people engaging and trying to get questions and put out information and things like that. He stated that there were a lot of first-time voters in this referendum, noting that 1,300 voters turned out; when they normally have about 400 voters. Therefore, he stated that he thought we missed an opportunity collectively to try to push information out there; and while he was not sure what exactly this looks like; that there was an opportunity to try to guide the town through this rather unique situation. He stated that we have to take an eight-month process and boil it down to three-weeks now and show everybody that “*It was not just as simple as this; or Why does it look like this?*” He stated that he thought the biggest thing that they could do in the next round, was starting with the Finance Committee, they could articulate: (1) What got cut and why: (2) What were some other decisions that we knew were on people's minds; and (3) Why they did; or not do certain things. He stated whether it was a one-page letter or something like that; just so the town has a shared mental model of what decisions got made here, so that we can get folks to a “*Yes*” from their original “*No*” vote. He stated that he did not know why folks voted the way they did; but that there was enough information out there for first time voters to try to understand some of that. He stated this was a unique situation between now and the second referendum, and on June 10, 2025; and if it has to go to a full Council. He stated following the referendum, a compressed version of that may help as well. Thank you.

Councilor Brunelle thanked Mr. Hurt for his comments, noting that he had a great idea.

Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, 95 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, noted that he was present to talk about his February 17, 2025 email which was on tonight’s agenda.

Mr. Lamb went on to state that he was a member of the Board of Education, noting that he and Board Member Jen Reguin formed a Subcommittee noted that they were working on some opportunities they were excited about. He stated that perhaps this Committee and the Board of Education’s Subcommittee could work together. He stated that he would talk about these initiatives later this evening.

Councilor Brunelle stated the two Committees could work together on some projects and help each other out. She stated that she looked forward to hearing about Mr. Lamb’s ideas later this evening.

IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATION

IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2025

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

VOTE: 2 – 0- 1 – Approved and so declared (Barnes abstained)

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, noting that as the weather warms up they would work to help to facilitate programs such as:

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

Councilor Brunelle stated the Committee was working with Ms. Betsy Graham and Parks & Recreation to engage residents and showcase the Lantern Hill Waterfront Park. She went on to note that Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., was working to make some improvements to the Park that would include picnic benches, etc., before they invited residents to see the new Park. She stated that they were looking to have the Informal Conversation at the *Lantern Hill Waterfront Park* closer towards the end of summer or fall.

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

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 06/18/2025- 6:30 p.m.

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

Councilor Brunelle stated with the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget not being approved at the May 20, 2025 Referendum, that Department Heads have been busy working to prepare for the second Budget Referendum scheduled for June 10, 2025. Therefore, she stated that the Committee would keep this item on their agenda.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 06/18/2025 - 6:30 p.m.

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

Councilor Brunelle stated that Chairman Rodriguez and Councilor St. Vil have been working on this item. She noted that Chairman Rodriguez was not present this evening, therefore she asked whether Council St. Vil had any comments.

Councilor St. Vil, attending remotely via Zoon, noted that Chairman Rodriguez recently reported that a discussion between Mayor Allyn, III, herself, and the Members of Mashantucket Pequot Tribe Council was scheduled. Therefore, he stated that he thought it would be appropriate to Table this item to allow Chairman Rodriguez to give an update at their next meeting.

Councilor Barnes stated that he was looking to understand this Agenda Item. He stated that he would share with the Committee his perspective, noting that before becoming involved on the Town Council that if someone were to ask him on the street who was the Town's principal engagement with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN) Council that he would have guessed that it was the Mayor, and that the Mayor would be the person that would bring back the recommendations for the Town Council's

involvement. He stated that he did not know if his presumption was right or wrong; but that he would not have expected the Town Council Chairman to be as involved. He stated that he did not know if there was history as to whether that has been the case with prior Town Councils. He stated that he did not know if either Councilor St. Vil or Councilor Brunelle had any perspective as to whether the relationship they now had was consistent with the way they handled this in the past.

Councilor Brunelle stated although she could be wrong that she believed that there has been no relationships in the past between the Town and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; and so that was the whole reason that Chairman Rodriguez got involved. She stated that Chairman Rodriguez had someone on the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council that she was talking to, and they wanted to increase the relationship; and so we decided it would be a good fit with our Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion to start engaging with them and seeing how we could start a small conversation. She stated that Chairman Rodriguez set up meetings between the Mayor, herself and the Member of Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Council; noting that was where it started. She stated that there was no history, because it never was done, and it really should have been done; and we should have been having relations with them for a long time. Councilor Brunelle asked Councilor St. Vil to correct her if her perspective was wrong.

Councilor St. Vil stated that he would like to better understand Councilor Barnes' perspective; or the foundation for his perspective. He questioned the framework that led Councilor Barnes to have the expectation that it would be the Mayor and not necessarily either a combination of the Mayor and the Town Council, or the Town Council, independent of the Mayor, noting maybe there was something that they were missing.

Councilor Barnes stated that his perspective was because the Mayor as the Chief Executive Officer of the Town, and that relationships with other towns; and other entities such as the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation would be through the Mayor's Office. He stated if the focus of this Committee and its relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Council was solely for community relations, diversity, equity, and inclusion, then maybe this group was the right one to address those issues. However, he stated if the focus was on something larger that was where his misunderstanding maybe.

Councilor Barnes continued by stating if the focus of the relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation was solely about community relations, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, then his question would be "*Why the Chairman of the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion was not the one driving those conversations?*". Therefore, he stated that he was just curious, noting that he could understand the Mayor, as the Chief Executive Officer of the Town, having discussions with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; and that he could also see the Chairman of this Committee having discussions, however, he stated that he was not certain what the Town Council Chairman's role was in that.

Councilor Brunelle stated, well, as far as Chairman Rodriguez's involvement goes, that it was just how it evolved. She stated that Chairman Rodriguez made the first contact with the Mashantucket Pequot Nation, and started the whole initiative; and pretty much put out

the hand for conversation. She stated that there was not that much attention, noting that Chairman Rodriguez had a conversation with a Member of Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Council; and since she was the Town Council Chairman she brought it to this Committee.

Councilor Brunelle went on to state that the Town Council worked for the Town; and the Mayor even worked for the Town. She stated that the Town Council does not get paid, and that we do represent the town that was why we make sure that all the rules and all the guidelines were followed. That was why we have our Finance Committee, stating everything goes through the Town Council; and as the Community Relations Committee, that they were not only for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, *Community Relations* was the first part.

Councilor Brunelle stated because the Committee's first part was *Community Relations* that an important part of their work was for residents like Jacob Hurt to come forward and ask that we help with getting more information out about the budget, which was perfectly in our realm to do; because it was *Community Relations*. She stated that they were reaching out to talk to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN) which lives in the same area, and in Ledyard. She stated that it was *Community Relations*, and it was totally under our bucket; and as far as Chairman Rodriguez leading it, that was because she was the first to initiate it, and they felt comfortable talking with her; and there was a lot of unease between the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the Town of Ledyard, basically because of a lot of issues legal issues, and taxing issues; so it was an easier time to have someone who already had a talking relationship with them to be part of this relation. She stated that Councilor St. Vil was a perfect candidate as part of our Community Relations Committee to do that; and she does not believe it always has to be the Town Council Chairman that does everything. She stated that it was the whole body of the Town Council Chairman and the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion working together, and it works great so far. She stated that Councilor St. Vil could correct her if she was wrong, but as far as she was concerned that the arrangement has been working great stating that they have had some motion forward; and it has not been stagnating. She stated in the past they were not able to get something like this accomplished.

Councilor Barnes noted that he agreed with Councilor St. Vil to table this discussion until Chairman Rodriguez was back. However, he stated that he would like to share his perspective, noting that if there were discussions between this Committee and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation that they ought to be able know the status of those discussions. He stated that perhaps nothing happened; however, he stated that Chairman Rodriguez was not on the Finance Committee, and they were talking about the Budget. Therefore, he questioned what was happening that required Chairman Rodriguez to be involved in the conversations that she has been having with Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council; and then she has to report back to us on those.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she was not in those conversations with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; and therefore, she did not have any feedback, which was why Chairman Rodriguez normally gives her feedback. Councilor Barnes questioned whether anyone on this Committee has been involved or whether Chairman Rodriguez was the only one speaking with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

Councilor St. Vil stated that he appreciated Councilor Barnes' questions and his desire to understand their work. He noted that Councilor Brunelle has enumeration of the genesis of this agenda item, noting that it has been an ongoing Old Business Item for some time. He stated that Councilor Barnes has been attending the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion meetings at which some they have discussed this subject and they have received an update. He stated that he was sensing some consternation from Councilor Barnes with the Committee's desire to wait for Town Council Chairman Rodriguez to provide an update. Therefore, he questioned whether Councilor Barnes had a specific concern or reasons with waiting for Chairman Rodriguez to provide an update regarding her discussions with the Members of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Council. Councilor Barnes noted that due to work commitments that he missed the April meeting; and with his appointment to the Town Council that he began to attend the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Meeting in February, 2025; therefore, he stated to date that he only attended two prior meetings to date. However, he stated that this item was still on the agenda, and it says, *"Discuss starting a relationship with Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation"*; therefore, he questioned whether they have nothing to say; and whether there was nothing since the last meeting. Councilor Brunelle stated that they did not have anything at this moment, but that they were keeping it on the agenda, because they know that they would have something. Councilor Barnes stated that he did not know if this Committee was doing something, or maybe they were not; or maybe this was solely in the purview of Chairman Rodriguez to initiate. He stated at some point the Town Council Chairman should not be the one that has to direct what this Committee was going to do, noting that they ought to be an independent body.

Councilor St. Vil stated this the Community Relations Committee for Divestiy, Inclusion & Equity was not the only Committee he has served on in town; and that he knew that Councilor Barnes had served on other town Committees as well. He stated that they have some Standing Business Items that they keep on their agendas and he noted from month to month that there may; or may not be an update. He questioned whether Councilor Barnes' concern was about Chairman Rodriguez; or was his concern about the lack of progress on this agenda item. Councilor Barnes stated that he has attended two meetings so far, and that he missed one due to business travel, and that he does not feel that this Committee was engaged in this matter, because the Town Council Chairman was.

Councilor St. Vil stated although there has not been much discussion regarding this Old Business item since Councilor Barnes joined the Committee; that if he went back into the Meeting Minutes that he would Chairman Rodriguez has provided updates regarding her discussions with Members of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Council.

However, he stated to Councilor Barnes' point that it would be a greater priority for the Mayor as the executive branch of the town to have a working relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. Therefore, he stated in parallel there have been planned discussions between Town Council Chairman Rodriguez and Mayor Allyn. However, he stated the next discussion point was a debriefing from the Mayor; and he questioned whether Councilor Barnes had heard anything from the Mayor. Councilor Barnes stated that he heard anything from the Mayor.

Councilor St. Vil went on to note that one of the discussions and planned activities that was shared with the Town Council was the upcoming Mashantucket Pequot Nation's 17th Annual Mental Health Awareness Event that was scheduled for Friday, May 30, 2025 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at 2 Matts Path, Mashantucket.

Councilor Brunelle stated that they were waiting for direction from either the Chairman and/or the Mayor on how we best engage, noting that they do not have anything at the moment.

Councilor St. Vil stated that this was situational awareness; and he noted as the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion that there was absolutely an outreach for members of the Tribal Community that may live in Ledyard, or may and interact with Ledyard through their schools, or residency. However, he stated that the precedent and the priority was the executive branch, and there were discussions ongoing between the executive branch. Therefore, he stated that they would want to prioritize that first, and then wrap the communication mechanism around that. He stated that was the brief that this Committee was waiting on in parallel, which would be opportunities for them to interface. He stated just because they have not heard anything from Mayor Allyn or Chairman Rodriguez does not mean that there was nothing going on there; and he noted that they have to prioritize our time.

Councilor Barnes noted as they previously mentioned that they could not do anything this evening because Chairman Rodriguez was not here; and partly because they have not received the direction from the executive portion of the town; which was fine. He stated what was a concern to him was what if the Chairman became ill, would this thing just stop. He stated that they have to be able to operate independently. He stated that he understands that there were two aspects of the town government involved; and that he thought that they were taking the action to initiate it, noting that they were probably not ready to proceed; and that would be an acceptable status for him. However, he questioned whether they could not proceed because and they needed to Table the item because the Chairman was not at their meeting. He stated that the Chairman should not have to be at a Committee meeting; even if she was in town.

Councilor Brunelle commented on the Committee tabling items and she noted as an example that Mr. Lamb had provided some correspondence that they will discuss later this evening. However, she stated that the Committee had tabled the topics that Mr. Lamb suggested in his correspondence because he was not able to attend their previous meeting; and they wanted to talk with him about his suggestions. Therefore, she stated that they like to have the proper people in place to have the conversation. Councilor Barnes stated the scenario Councilor Brunelle just described was different, because Mr.

Lamb would be a guest, who would be attending their Committee meeting present his ideas or suggestions.

Councilor Barnes went on to state that he did not want to dwell on this; noting that he understands what his fellow Councilors have explained. He stated that the initial status he heard was “*We were going to table the Old Business Item #3 - Start a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council to help foster communication and mutual points of interest*” because the Town Council Chairman was not here”. He stated that there would be many meetings where the Chairman may not be here. He stated that he also understands that the involvement of the Mayor may not have progressed, and with the current budget situation that it was likely that it would not progress for the next couple months. He stated that he was good with that status; noting that what he was not good with was that this Committee could not discuss the item because the Town Council Chairman was not present this evening. He stated that he did not think that the relationship was solely in the purview of the Chairman; because that relationship was with this Committee; and it was with the Mayor, and it was certainly with some extent with the Chairman. He stated that he just does not understand the comment that “*We can't do it because the Chairman was not here*”. Councilor Brunelle stated that all that was mentioned was that they could not discuss the item because the person was not here to give their report, that was all that was.

Councilor Barnes stated Old Business Item #3 was to “*Discuss starting a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council to help foster communication and mutual points of interest*” He stated that it was not a “*Report*”. He stated the Committee does not have a Report. Therefore, he asked that the Committee adjust their agenda to note that the next status on this item was a readout of the Report, and if a Report was not available that was fine. However, he stated that the agenda item is to “*Discuss starting relationship*”; that was what confused him.

Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, 95 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, Board of Education Member, asked if the Chairman would recognize guests from the Board of Education, noting that he believed that he could add something to this discussion. Councilor Brunelle agreed for Mr. Lamb to address the Committee.

Mr. Lamb stated that the Board of Education has a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Nation, noting that they have mandatory meetings at which they discuss school related matters that included sports and funding, etc.

Mr. Lamb continued by stating that he was the Historic District Commission Chairman and he stated that the Commission has been discussing building a relationship with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation because the Commission was thinking about re-establishing the Ledyard Oak Tree and they would like to get the Tribe’s input about their sacred space. Therefore, he questioned whether there was some coordination with regard to communicating with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation that he was not aware of. He asked that the Committee let him know if the Historic District Commission should be not be doing this independently; or whether they should be going through the Town Council.

Mr. Lamb went on to note that Connecticut has another State recognized Tribal Nation in our Town. He stated that he understands that Ledyard focuses on the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; however, he suggested they conduct an outreach to all Tribes that were either in our district or adjacent to it.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she agreed with Mr. Lamb's suggestion, and she thanked him for his comments. She stated that great things that came out of this conversation; and that she would move on to Item #4.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 06/18/2025 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 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, because some of their other Committees have been taking the lead. She noted the town was working with Organizations to provide opioid and substance abuse and recovery programs.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 6/18/2025 6:30 p.m.

5. 2025 Schedule for Informal Conversation Forums and Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives.
- Mr. Lamb's email dated 2/17/2025 re: Topics for the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, 95 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, stating in reviewing the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion's Meeting Minutes that he saw that they were looking to do things with Community Groups which was the reason he submitted his suggestions to consider including the following:

Organizations for those with Disabilities

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. He stated that he sees a lack for services for those with disabilities, noting when he was working with United Cerebral Palsy (UCP); they had Connecticut Teams that would compete nationally. He stated that they would use the use the high schools for functions and events.

Immigrant Community

Mr. Lamb stated that he was also involved with the Immigrant Community and Newcomer Communities. He stated that he was currently involved with the Brazil Baptist Church in New London, noting that he does Bible Studies, Camp outs, and other things with them. He explained that they also work with Churches in Massachusetts and have started English as Second Language Classes for immigrant communities. He stated he has seen the new people bring energy to the churches that had older people and they have revitalized the community.

Mr. Lamb stated that he could go on about what both of these Organizations do. However he stated he sent his February 17, 2025 email because he did not see these two communities on the Committee's List to be recognized in any way.

Mr. Lamb continued by addressing this Committee's work for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion noting at Electric Boat that he was part of the Hispanic Shipbuilders Association. He stated their Association made a pitch, and they were now going to the Middle Schools to do some really cool stuff with the kids. He stated working with these communities that they have the people that their kids; who were like their First Generation; because the parents just came to this country and they have really not totally integrated because they do not know all the opportunities that were available to them.

Mr. Lamb went on to tell a story one man he met at Electric Boat who was a child of immigrant parents that worked for farmer out west where they were picking fruits and other produce. He stated the man he met at work learned about some opportunities he became an engineer and was now working at Electric Boat-General Dynamics building ships for the United States Navy. Therefore, he stated that they wanted to bring these stories to immigrant community to let their children know that they do have the American Dream opportunities; and show them how to gain that access to those opportunities.

Mr. Lamb stated to clarify the reason he sent his February 17, 2025 email that it was to have it his suggestions on record, in addition to his verbal suggestions. He asked if the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion could remind him about their initiative, noting that it appeared to him that the Committee was just picking out different communities to highlight per month.

Councilor Brunelle stated that the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion was working to bring to light to those communities and to maybe find some ways to engage them. She noted as an example that they were trying to do a monthly thing like a poetry slam which they did at Lucille's Restaurant in Ledyard Center for Black History Month and Woman's History Month. However, she stated that it could be an event in the Park; or maybe something at the libraries. She stated that they were looking to engage with the different communities.

Mr. Lamb expounded on his suggestion to acknowledge those with disabilities, explaining that they could have a mixed team of able body and handicapped people to re-energize this type of initiative. He continued by sharing the following story with the

Committee noting that one of the greatest enrichments he ever saw was when they took their Handicap Soccer Team to play College Soccer Teams. He stated before the games that the college players would come up to him and ask whether they should take it easy; and not play hard with the handicap team. He stated that he would respond to their questions by saying “*Do what you want*”. He stated because the college team was playing people who lived in their wheelchairs, that by half time you saw the college kids were questioning how they were getting beat. He stated by the end of the games that people's eyes were opened that handicapped people had great abilities just like anybody else. He stated it was a great experience for all; and that was the reason they would rotate scheduling their Handicap Soccer Team to play College Soccer Teams.

Councilor Brunelle thanked Mr. Lamb for his suggestions and for sharing his experiences.

Councilor Barnes thanked Mr. Lamb for his suggestions, noting that he brought up a number of great opportunities. He stated the number of various groups they could engage with in any given calendar year far exceeds the number of months they have. However, he stated it was important that they bring awareness of these groups, noting that they may have opportunities to include them in some event. He noted without Mr. Lamb bringing these groups to their attention that they might not have otherwise done so.

Mr. Lamb offered to contact United Cerebral Palsy and other handicap facilities to see if there would be enough interest for some type of mixed program with the schools. He stated that he could bring the information back to the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; and if they chose to they could add an item to their agenda. Councilor Brunelle responded to Mr. Lamb's offer by stating that once he had some information that they would include an item on the Agenda.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 6/18/2025 6:30 p.m.

6. Possible Designated Youth Fishing Waterway.

Councilor Burnelle noted that Councilor Barnes brought this idea to the Committee and she deferred to him to provide an update.

Councilor Barnes stated that he attended the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission May 20, 2025 Meeting yesterday. He stated that he initially discussed his proposal for a Designated Youth Fishing Waterway was with them because the fishing area would likely be at a Park Recreation Program. He noted the following things came out of their discussion:

- Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission – Councilor Barnes stated during their discussion to Designate a Youth Fishing Area that the Commission recognized that perhaps this could be an opportunity for the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection. He stated that DEEP has stocked the Sawmill Pond with fish in the past and

that this year's fish stocking would be free. He noted that the Commission voted to allow the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to stock the Sawmill Pond with fish.

- Historic Up-Down Sawmill - Councilor Barnes stated the Historic District Commission discussed the opportunity to put in a Designated Youth Fishing Area at the Up-Down Sawmill. He stated because learning to fish for a child could be boring, that being able learn at a place where they would likely catch something would be exciting for them. He stated with Sawmill Pond being stocked with fish that it would make it a better fishing experience for children.

Councilor Barnes continued to note that some improvement work was being done at the Up-Down Saw Mill and he did not know when it would be completed. However, he stated when they designate the Youth Fishing Area, which would be under Parks & Recreation, that that signage would be put up; and that the signage would also state "*No Swimming*".

Councilor Barnes went on to explain that the Designed Youth Fishing area would be near the parking lot and the Sawmill, noting that there was not a lot of trees in that area; and that he has occasionally fished there. He stated on the far end there were some large snapping turtles, so they may want to keep children away from that area. He stated that it was a really nice area, and that the Plan was to designate by signage an area for the Youth Fishing.

Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, 95 Lambtown Road, Historic District Commission Chairman stated having a Designated Youth Fishing Waterway at Sawmill Pond would be a win-win because there were typically people at the Sawmill that might be able to help out.

Councilor Brunelle stated when they get the *Designated Youth Fishing Waterway* signage up that they could blast that out through social media and maybe have a Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting Event.

Councilor Barnes stated although the Sawmill would be amenable to it the idea that they have to keep in mind that this was not their Pond. He stated that they would need to follow this initiative in the weeks to come, noting that it would be a good story.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 6/18/2025 6:30 p.m.

7. Recognition of Colonel William Ledyard.

Councilor Barnes stated Memorial Day Weekend was going to be jam packed with activities. He stated the Bill Memorial Library in Groton was prepared to be available to have Colonel William Ledyard's Sword present should Ledyard have any ceremony on

Memorial Day - Monday, May 26, 2025. However, he stated with some activities being held on Saturday May 24, 2025 and Ledyard's Memorial Day Parade being held on Sunday, May 25, 2025; that he did not think this would be the right time to recognize Colonel William Ledyard and have his Sword available for the event. He stated that he spoke to the Groton Bill Memorial Library Director Jennifer Miele earlier this week to let her know that as much as Ledyard appreciated their offer; that they did not have the advertising in place and knowledge of what we do in time for Memorial Day this year. However, he stated that Ms. Miele committed to doing this in the future; should a venue or a timing emerge such as a 4th of July Celebration or something else.

Councilor Barnes stated that Colonel William Ledyard's Sword was incredibly historic. He stated that he did not think many people in the community even know that it exists, much less know that the actual Sword was hanging on display at the Groton Bill Memorial Library. He stated although he currently does not have a planned time to recognize Colonel William Ledyard, that perhaps the upcoming 250th Anniversary of our Nation; or the Anniversary of the Groton Heights Battle would an appropriate time.

Councilor Barnes suggested the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion think about an appropriate venue to recognize Colonel William Ledyard to discuss at their June 18, 2025 meeting; and perhaps they could start to develop a Plan.

Councilor Brunelle stated that recognizing Colonel William Ledyard with some type of ceremony was something she would definitely like to do.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 6/18/2025 6:30 p.m.

8. Hosting Booths at 2025 Summer Farmers' Market.

Councilor Brunelle stated the 2025 Farmers Market will start on June 4, 2025. She noted that the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion would have a Booth at the Market on the following Dates: June 4, 2025; and June 18, 2025. She stated if other Committee Members would like to join her that would be great.

Councilor Brunelle opened the floor to suggestions for ideas of what Committee could do at their Farmers Market Booths:

Councilor Brunelle suggested the following ideas:

- Sign Residents up for “*Notify Me*” to receive Town Notifications of Meetings; Other Events; and Emergency Notifications via email, or text, or both.
- Provide a Summary of the things the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion has done so far this year; and what they were planning to do for the remainder of the year. She stated that they could make something up and display it on the table, so people can see what they have done and what we plan to do.

- Other Committees could join them and hand out brochures on what they do; such as the Historic District Commission or Conservation Commission. Councilor Brunelle stated that she would ask Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher to send a note to all the Department Heads to say “*You’re more than welcome to join us. Just give us a heads up. You can join our table. Bring pamphlets, bring yourself*”

Councilor Brunelle stated that she thought the Farmers’ Market Opening Day on June 4, 2025 would be a big one, because everybody wants to get back; and that she also thought the June 18, 2025 Market would also be a busy.

Councilor Brunelle went on to note that last summer they also worked with the Beautification Committee and that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry providing information to residents regarding the Food Scrap Compost Program, and that Organizations provided information regarding Mental Health Programs and Services.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 6/18/2025 6:30 p.m.

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

Pride Day - Pizza Picnic in Park

Councilor Brunelle stated under Old Business that she would like to report that she has been planning a *Pride Day Pizza Picnic In The Park* for June 28, 2025 from 12:00 Noon to 4:00 p.m. on the Town Green. She stated they could not do a Parade because we needed to apply 90 days ahead of time to set up the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) and everything for that.

Councilor Brunelle stated that last year they had their *First Pride Day* ever and that it was really great. She stated we called it *Pizza in the Park*, and for this one that we can do the same thing. She stated we could call it “*Pride Day - Pizza Picnic In The Park*”. She stated that they were going to have Pizza; Chet’s Ice Cream Truck, for people to purchase and that she had a Face Painter, Balloon Twister, and a DJ lined up; and that she might even have a band. She stated that June was a very busy time for food vendors; so it was really hard to get them to come to an event; noting that she was working on a pizza vendor right now.

Councilor Brunelle went on to state that the *Pride Day - Pizza Picnic in Park* would be held on the Town Green and that it would be much like last year where it was just an informal event that families and friends, and everybody could show up; and have fun. She noted that last year the lovely Church that was next to the Town Green came out and put up a banner and joined us.

Mr. Lamb asked Councilor Brunelle whether she has considered reaching out to the DEI Committee at Electric Boat to see if they might like to attend their *Pride Day Pizza Picnic in the Park* and help out. Councilor Brunelle stated that she did not know that

Electric Boat had a DEI Committee and that she would follow up with them; and that she would also reach out the Board of Education's DEI Committee. Mr. Lamb stated that he would provide Councilor Brunelle the EOC's contact information at Electric Boat.

Councilor Barnes stated that he would announce the June 28, 2025 *Pride Day - Pizza Picnic in the Park* at the Ledyard Congregational Church. He stated that they were proud of the open and affirming commitment they made several years ago. He stated the Church has had the Rainbow Symbol on a variety of things from doors to chairs, noting that he was sure some of their Church Members would be interested.

Councilor Brunelle stated the *Pride Day Pizza - Picnic in the Park* would be held on June 28, 2025 from 12:00 Noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Town Green, noting that she already secured Town Green through the Parks and Recreation Department.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 6/18/2025 6:30 p.m.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion regarding Establishing a "Man of the Year Award".

Councilor Brunelle stated that since they just had a great "*Linda C. Davis Women of the Year Award*" that she thought it might be fair and equal to discuss establishing a "*Ledyard Man of Year Award*"; and she opened the floor for discussion.

Councilor Barnes stated that he liked having a Linda C. Davis as the namesake for the Woman of the Year Award; and he questioned whether they had a namesake for the Man of the Year Award. Councilor Brunelle stated that they did not have a namesake yet and that they could discuss suggestions.

Councilor St. Vil stated that he was aligned with Councilor Barnes with having a namesake. He stated what made the *Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award* was that it was associated with Linda Davis who essentially was quoted to be "*Mother Ledyard*". Therefore, he stated with the *Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award* that there was a namesake, a behavior, and a culture that was associated with it.

Councilor St. Vil went on to state that he did not think that everything needed to have an equal and opposite award to go with it. He stated that he thought that the *Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award* was unique; and it was representative of her legacy, and hopefully that would continue into the future. However, he stated if either of their Committee Members knew a male they wanted to do something similar that they could advocate for it. He stated that he did not have any namesakes to suggest but that he was looking forward to Councilor Barnes' recommendation on their Colonel Ledyard Centric Event. He stated perhaps they could couple something with that, however, he stated with

the limited time and effort required that he would suggest that they focus on the event to recognize Colonel William Ledyard noting that he would be in line with that rather than a Man of the Year or Person of the Year.

Councilor Barnes stated that he appreciated Councilor St. Vil's comments that "*Everything did not need to have an equal and opposite award to go with it*". Councilor Barnes stated that sometimes they will do one thing, and it does not necessarily mean that they have to do something else; as Councilor St. Vil described.

Councilor Barnes went on to state that what Linda Davis represented for the town in their recent history was significant. He stated that she touched so many people, both in her career and in the work she did in her the community. He stated that she created *I Love Ledyard Website*. He stated when folks would argue between Gales Ferry and Ledyard that Linda Davis would say "*Well, Gales Ferry is the capital of Ledyard*" which he thought was the greatest way to describe it. He stated that that it was appropriate to have the *Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award*, and that he fully supported it. However, he stated that in the future they might make that the Linda Davis Person of the Year, because the value she demonstrated, and lived by, regardless of gender; which would be significant.

Councilor Barnes continued by stating that he thought they should keep the *Man of the Year Award* idea noting that there may become someone for which it would make sense. However, he stated if they could decide in a year from now that they have not progressed this idea that they might consider rebranding the award to the *Person of the Year*; still honoring Linda Davis. He stated that he did not think they had a better person in Ledyard's recent history.

Councilor Brunelle stated in listening to Councilor St. Vil and Councilor Barnes comments that she had a crazy idea that she was going to throw it out for discussion. She suggested that when they have the Colonel William Ledyard Sword Recognition Ceremony, that perhaps they consider naming the Award after Colonel Ledyard. She stated it could be the *Colonel Ledyard Person of the Year Award*; or *Colonel Ledyard Man of the Year Award*. She stated the Award could represent someone who did a lot of service and time for the town, just as Colonel Ledyard sacrificed his life, stating that well, he did not sacrifice himself, noting that he was murdered.

Councilor Barnes stated that Memorial Day would have been ideal to recognize Colonel William Ledyard because he sacrificed the thing that we now honor with the Memorial Day Holiday. However, he sated because this was the Committee's last meeting before Memorial Day in terms of timing that they just did not have enough time to put something meaningful together. Councilor Barnes went on to state that the Battle of Groton Heights was fought on September 6, 1781 and he noted that it was not milestone year for that. He stated in considering doing something in September would get them into Labor Day. He stated that trying to get people somewhere in the summer was hard. Therefore, he stated that looking toward planning something in September, that there may be an opportunity to do a Recognition Ceremony then.

Councilor Brunelle stated the Committee would keep this item on their agenda to continue to discuss ideas.

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

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting: 6/18/2025 6:30 p.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Councilor Brunelle moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Barnes.
3 – 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

April Brunelle
Committee Chairman
Community Relations Committee