



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

06/13/2011 Approved Minutes

Vision 2020 Diversity Task Group (DTG)
Approved Minutes of June 13, 2011

Present: Miriam Stein (co-chair), Jane Howard, David Landskov, Claire Carswell, Leslie Bass, Mary Harrison, Diem Dangers

Miriam provided a brief background on the Response Coordination Team and a quick update on some of its new activities. The Response Coordination Team was developed to respond to incidents of uncivil discourse or ethnic/religious crimes in Arlington (an example might be the protest of the Laramie Project, or the comments on facebook about the METCO student Dance). The RCT members include Miriam Stein, the Human Rights Commission, Chair of School Committee (?), Superintendent of Public Schools, Town Manager, Police Chief and two Clergy members. Recently, the RCT invited Chip Berlet, an expert on civil discourse, to speak about developing a way to effectively respond to such incidences.

Since the passing of the override vote in the election June 7th 2011, there are openings for new teachers and staff in the Arlington Public School system including the hiring of more staff of color. Currently there are 20 professionals of color out of a total of 300 in the school system. There will also be a Diversity training for 60 staff.

Regarding the outreach to Spanish speaking residents of Arlington, there is a plan for specific members of the diversity committee interested in this topic to meet on July 6th 2011 in the Cutter Gallery to discuss more concrete plans.

The Arlington International Film Festival will take place at the Regent Theater October 6-9th 2011 featuring films from Tunisia. The details of the festival are not solid yet, but the festival will include professional films as well as film projects created by highschool students. Because the festival coincides with Yom Kippur, Miriam offered to double check with the festival organizers about the appropriateness of the timing.

Arlington Town Day will be on September 17th 2011 to celebrate Uncle Sam Wilson's Birthday (he lived in Arlington). The night before the event, there will be a barbeque sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club at Spy Pond and on the day, booths will be set up for local businesses to advertise and sell their goods. Vision 2020 also will have a booth and display with the goal of recruiting more members. Volunteers are needed to be at the booth for two hour shifts from 10am - 3pm as well as set-up which starts at 8:30am and clean up. A member offered to do the 10am-12noon shift, and another member offered to do outreach to Spanish speaking residents for ideas about an event to distribute fliers about. Diem offered to think of a way of using an interactive arts activity to attract more members.

There will be a Community Book Read in the Fall 2011. Briefly, the event will be held at the Arlington Library and one hundred books are distributed to interested community members with the goal of generating discussion about a topic related to the theme of the book. This Fall 2011, the book of focus will be *Zaitoun* by Dave Edgars. Briefly, it is a story about an Islamic family and their experience living in New Orleans after Katrina. The book is available in audio format but members of the DTG were not sure whether it is available in braille.

There was a question about the ethnic and gender make-up of the Diversity Task Group itself and older members mentioned they were aware of this issue and that in the past the DTG had been a more diverse group but due to differences of opinion, certain members left and the group is as it is today. Current members expressed an interest in developing an outreach plan to diversify the current members. Claire and Leslie offered to spearhead the effort to get more people involved in the group.

Andy Oram will be attending the September 12th 2011 DTG meeting to get the Task Group up to speed on social media. Although there is already mention of the DTG in the Arlington facebook page, it was mentioned there is a need for the DTG to be more visible in various forms of social media.

David recommended a great film about physical disability called *Rolling* and offered to coordinate a showing for the DTG on July 13th 2011 at 7pm in the First Parish Church. The plan is to have the DTG preview the film before showing it to the public.

The schedule of meetings for next year is as follows:

2011

September 12

October 17

November 14

December 12

2012

January 9

February 13

March 12

April 9

May 14

June 11