



Envision Arlington Diversity Task Group

Date: August 19, 2019
Time: 6:45 – 9:00pm
Location: Jefferson Cutter House (basement)

Minutes

Attendance: Michaiah Healy, Julietta Gleiser, Katell Guellec, Louise Bopkin, Rajeev Soneja, Miriam Stein, Brooks Harrelson, Mona Mandal, Lynette Martyn, Robin Bergman, Lucy Sanders, Kelly Lynema, Elizabeth Dray, Edith Wun, Betty Stone, Laura Keisel, Eric Pohl, Jordanna Saintil

1. **Ice-breaker:** Name, how you'd like to be identified at these meetings, and how you manage the transition from summer to fall.
2. Review of minutes for June 17th brainstorming meeting
 - a. Can we have funds for an admin? Kelly said she can check on how that would work, would need to ask through the AHRC at town meeting. Brooks wonders if the new diversity coordinator position includes DTG oversight. Mona said it will not be involved with the DIGs.
 - b. The June 17 minutes were approved.
3. Town day participation (09/14/19): one of the only ways that newcomers in town find out about groups like ours.
 - a. We need an activity for kids. Pinwheels for Peace was suggested. (Louise has website)
 - b. We should use the display that was at the library.
 - c. It was suggested to shorten shifts to one hour to allow for more volunteer flexibility.
4. DTG's role in reaching underrepresented groups for 2020 Census
 - a. Kelly: There will be a complete count working group of citizens in town organized around this due to mistrust that has built up around the Census in general. The working group will start meeting after Town Day and wrap up in June.
 - b. There was discussion about reaching out to undocumented and under underrepresented citizens on this when you don't also talk about the Pedrini situation and other concerns that have contributed to a lack of trust.

- c. Need to be thoughtful about reaching out to all groups and not lump them together, e.g. undocumented folks are not in the same category as others.
 - d. Question: Can strategies used to reach people be documented and shared? Yes, Kelly thinks these could be public.
5. Unmarked graves of enslaved people in Arlington project:
- a. Michaiah explained she received an email from the UU community about a section in the graveyard on Pleasant St. next to the church that has unmarked stones, reached out to the historic society to learn more. But needs someone to follow up and find out more.
 - b. It was suggested that this could be a project for community restoration funding; a high school class could take on as a project.
 - c. Elizabeth agreed to send to AHS teacher.
6. Approval of May 13 minutes: There was discussion about whether and how to amend the minutes that documented the meeting with the town manager and acting police chief. The following amendment was passed:
- * Note: It was not clarified to attendees whether Lt Pedrini already had received his gun. Several people's notes indicated that the gun would be returned in June. In addition, Julie Flaherty noted that there were several steps to the RJ process that needed to be completed by Lt Pedrini. She said that his words were racist and that she has known him for 23 years and that he is not racist. Adam clearly stated that the words were racist.
7. Tackling overt, covert, and unconscious racism in Arlington: who, what, how?
- a. It's important to be clear what we're talking about. This is racism – people get confused because they hear 'racism' and get nervous. DTG can make a difference in advancing the conversation.
 - b. When talking with white people of higher SES, the approach is important. It helps when talking about the historical piece that places us in positions of privilege.
 - c. Can this topic be tied in with TruStory Theater?
 - d. Julietta and Jordanna are working on a documentary with 5th grader and high school students. Goal is to teach students how to ask questions about racism and discrimination. Ask from a place of ignorance and being curious. Young children of color should not have to be scared to walk home from school alone in Arlington.
 - e. Are we the only town-level group focused on these issues?
 - f. To think long-term is for this to be part of curriculum – it's how we reach kids and parents. This year the district is having a consultant come in to assess the curriculum.
 - g. DTG needs to have a better sense of the cultural competency goals for teachers. As of now, all staff needs to have at least 8 hrs

of cultural competency training annually as part of district goals – can we clarify what is happening in that time? Miriam can invite Rod to one of our meetings. Brooks recommended reading the book that teachers are getting (“Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain”)

- h. Get high school students part of creating curriculum .
 - i. Being an Anti-Racist – possible choice for Arlington Reads.
 - j. Bishop DIG: one book a month on a diversity topic; this year the goal is to involve the parents by sending a questionnaire home.
8. Michaiah will check with Julie Brazile about if DTG can sign the Lt Pedrini petition as a task group. Attendees in favor of DTG signing on (11), 1 no and 2 abstains. Plan is to accept signatures through Nov 1 and formally give it to the town on Sept 1. Town has seen it and is already considering and acting on some of its recommendations.
*those who had attended DTG twice in the year could vote.
9. Jordana explained her role as a rising junior at AHS and founder of black student union, will be doing projects in and outside the school).