



Envision Arlington Standing Committee

Date: Wednesday, December 8, 2021
Time: 7:30 - 9:00 PM
Location: Remote participation via Zoom

Minutes

Members in attendance: Greg Christiana, Scott Lever, Juli Brazile, Alex Bagnall, Jagat Adhiya

Other attendees: Rebecca Gruber, Elizabeth Dray

1. Introductions

Introductions all around.

2. Approval of Minutes

November minutes approved unanimously.

3. Task Group Updates

Rebecca had no substantive DTG update to give. The next DTG meeting invites Superintendent Homan, Margaret Thomas (APS DEI Director), and Scott who will speak about the Annual Town Survey. Rebecca discussed a letter brought forward by proponents of Town Meeting warrant article to erect a BLM banner on Town Hall. The letter has already been signed by AFR, and DTG will vote on whether to endorse/sign as well. AHRC is expected to review the letter at their next meeting as well. The letter will be brought before the Select Board to urge them to take action on raising the banner. Scott said that he'd like to discuss the survey and outreach, and how DTG might figure into those efforts.

Jagat asked about the timeline for adding questions to the Annual Town Survey, which Scott will address in the next agenda item.

Greg gave an update on CEG, explaining that the group is interested in pivoting from longer term planning to more project-related work. And to start, the highest priority project will be outreach for the upcoming Annual Town Survey.

Rebecca asked Juli about whether it might make sense for elections-related civic efforts to be driven from CEG. Scott mentioned that some other towns, e.g. Brookline, have an official who is responsible for outreach. Elizabeth was supportive of a dedicated town position for outreach, e.g. performing translations.

Scott gave an update on the Education Task Group. He and Michael Brownstein drafted a grant for AEF which will total \$130,000. The Superintendent is driving the

process forward, and expects workshops to begin in March 2022 and run through June.

Jagat asked to what extent grant-writing should be part of the Superintendent's job. Scott explained the importance of gathering community input for the education vision, which is a role that ETG and AEF are well-positioned to serve.

4. Town Survey

Scott presented slides offering a preliminary look at the results analyzed from the 2021 Town survey. On the question "How welcoming is Arlington" across various dimensions, Scott found that 58% of respondents (out of 3368 total) found Arlington usually or always welcoming based on physical/mental disability; 22% not welcoming; 67% found the town usually or always welcoming based on race. White and non-white groups did not differ significantly in terms of how welcoming they find Arlington. Non-gendered, gender fluid, or non-binary respondents (~50) consistently rated Arlington less welcoming than either females (~1800) or males (~1000). Females consistently rated Arlington less welcoming on all dimensions than males.

Jagat asked about the survey capturing multiple races/ethnicities per respondent. Scott explained that this flexibility was challenging to analyze.

Greg asked whether other towns have similar number that we could compare Arlington against. Scott and Juli are not aware of other towns in the region capturing data with as much depth as Arlington does.

Scott then discussed safety. 19 respondents reported that they were not safe from physical violence in their home or community. Half of those respondents were female, another quarter non-binary, and 78% of those 19 were homeowners.

93% of respondents report they are very comfortable reporting a medical emergency, only 65% are comfortable reporting a hate crime, and 61% are very comfortable reporting a mental health emergency. In all cases the non-white group was less comfortable than the white group with calling the Arlington Police. Lastly, there was a positive correlation between being satisfied with living in Arlington and the comfort with calling the Police.

Len cautioned against reading too much into the term "hesitation" about calling the Police, since the concern may be less about the Police and more about getting the other party in trouble with the system. Elizabeth questioned the conclusion that Scott hypothesized about the correlation between satisfaction living in Arlington and comfort calling the Police. Juli suggested dropping the hypothesized conclusion and stick with the observation about the correlation. Elizabeth asked if this analysis could be shared with the Police Civilian Review Board Study Group. Scott suggested that he may speak with Chief Flaherty about these findings.

Elizabeth asked what follow-up will be done from these analyses. Scott mentioned publishing a report that's shared with Town Meeting, as well as reports to relevant boards and bodies, as well as media that can promote the results. Elizabeth voiced concern about response rate dropping if follow-through is perceived to be lacking.

Scott answered that it's mainly the responsibility of the Planning Department or other relevant departments to make use of the survey results in their priorities and efforts.

Scott circled back to Jagat's earlier question about the timeline for finalizing survey questions. There has been some discussion with Kelly and Jenny about possibly delaying the finalization of the survey questions. Bill Berkowitz shared some suggestions by email for formulating questions around civic engagement and participation. Juli suggested a timeline of getting the census data for mailing by the end of the year. Scott would like to see 75-90% of the same questions on the survey year over year.

Juli pointed out that there are useful resources in the Envision Arlington Google Drive folder under [2021 Survey > Communications Plan](#).

Scott called for volunteers to own outreach and communications. Greg volunteered CEG as the vehicle for driving those efforts. Jagat volunteered to work on communications, and would like to see about getting students involved in the effort. Scott suggested enlisting Town Meeting Members to help.

Greg suggested that anyone who's interested in volunteering on outreach and communications should try to attend next Monday's CEG meeting at 7:30 PM.

Discussion ensued about the nature of the partnership between Envision Arlington and the Planning Department in the development of the Town Survey.

5. New Business

Elizabeth gave a brief update on her application to the Standing Committee; the Town Manager has selected another applicant for the opening.

Len would like to discuss the Broadway Design effort at our next meeting.

Next planned meeting is January 19, 2022.

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 PM.