

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee

Special Meeting October 24, 2024 minutes

We acknowledge that Barre City was developed on Sokoki Abenaki land, which the Western Abenaki nation never ceded, made treaty for, nor were they conquered. We aspire to create a space in our meetings that is inclusive, participatory and equitable. We acknowledge we all come from different experiences and that our experiences may be affected by racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ableism and many other systems of oppression. We are here to address equity within the systems of our city in order to inform the City Council of our findings. We acknowledge that systemic inequities exist and do not debate the personal experiences of marginalized and underrepresented community members. With that in mind, it is important that we are thoughtful of the impact of our words on each other in this space.

Members: Joelen Mulvaney, Christopher Roberts, Ellen Kaye, William Toborg

Guest: Representative Jonathan Williams from Barre City

1. Meeting called to order at 6:30 due to technical difficulties
2. Adjustments to the agenda: No need to move the guest speaker up, as the City council has yet to acknowledge working group assignments and committee charge.
3. Ellen moved to accept minutes for August and September, seconded by William, unanimously accepted
4. Old business:
 - a) Postponed Finalize working group assignments; discuss first steps until next meeting
5. New business:
 - a. Discussion of possibilities for Barre city to learn about the Vermont climate action lawsuit against oil companies identifying the city's flood devastation as cause for standing. – Rep Jonathan Williams informed us about the state's Climate Superfund bill progress with the lawsuit and assured us there was no need to have the city enjoin the process at this time. Support for the lawsuit would be helpful, but the suit as it currently stands includes the entire state and is earmarked for the flood damaged areas of Vermont.

Joelen: Responsibility and resources to compensate Vermont for the damages large corporations who caused climate change leading to increase weather devastation. The City could sign an amicus brief to support the state's effort, explaining what it cost our community.

William: Global Warming Solutions Act unfairly puts the burden on small local oil firms, Williams said he would look into the possible disparity.

Chris: The lawsuit has not been filed, it was enacted in July of this year and the attorney general's office in working on it.

Ellen: We cannot shoulder the costs of these flood recovery projects, no municipality can pay for climate change damages. Bring us information as it goes for us to be creative in our approach.

- b. Schedule for meeting with organizations that serve the city – postponed until Emily could be present
- c. Report from meeting with City Council – Joelen reported that one of the problems between the council and our committee is that we have been struggling with how to serve the council best. We are still trying to get the council to accept our charge. Some City Council members are continuing to bash us and there is concern about our future relationship with them?

Chris: Suggested more frequent presence at Council meeting so we are more recognized.

- 6. Visitors and public comment – no visitors
- 7. Next meeting date: 11- 14- 2024
- 8. Adjourned: 7:36

Respectfully submitted,
Joelen Mulvaney, Chairperson