Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council

Regular Meeting
August 3, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

AGENDA

RECEIVED
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CT
2026 JUL 30 P 2:39
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Call to Order

1) Public Audience

2) Liaison Reports
   a. Board of Selectmen
   b. Town Manager's Office
   c. Simsbury Public Library
   d. Board of Education Equity Council

3) Chair(s) Update
   a. Student Representative Discussion

4) Review and Approve June 1, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

5) New Business
   a. 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization Discussion
   b. Hispanic Heritage Month Discussion

6) Old Business
   a. Juneteenth Recap
   b. Simsbury Civic Forum Update
   c. 350th Anniversary of King Phillip's War Update
   d. Honor Flight Recap
   e. Adopt DEI Council Logo

Adjourn

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June 1 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
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RECEIVED
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CT
2026 JUN -8 P 6:59
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

MINUTES

Call to Order:

- The Council was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Roll Call:

- Committee Members: Co-Chair Cheryl Cook, Co-Chair Rose Vigdal, Vice Chair Mala Matacin, Meg Evans, Juan Carlos Aguilar, Carol Clark-Flanagan, Ed LaMontagne, Leah Pitfield, Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz, Lydia Tedone, Devonna Hall

- Liaisons: Town Manager Marc Nelson, Selectwoman Diana Yeisley, Simsbury Public Library Director Lisa Miceli, Simsbury Public Schools Director of Equity and Access Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor, Management Specialist Franklyn Barrueco

- Volunteer: Melissa Smith, Cassie Taylor (virtual)

Liaison Reports:

- **Board of Selectmen:** Updates were provided by Selectwoman Diana Yeisley:
  - June is Pride and Accessibility Month. Today the Town celebrated Pride Month by raising the Pride Flag and supporting the Pride Picnic.
  - During a meeting with Town officials and representatives, the Simsbury High School Graduation will take place on the stage at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center. Juneteenth was not approved to be held on the stage by the Fire Marshall, at this time.
  - The Town Budget Referendum passed. The projected tax increase is lower than originally projected: 1.97%
  - An AARP grant was awarded to provide Mobi Matts to increase accessibility at Town events that are held on grass surfaces. Grant funding will also support improvements for the teen center, Apple Barn, and Eno Hall.
- **Town Manager's Office:** Updates were provided by Town Manager Marc Nelson:
  - The tax rate increase has decreased over the past 5 years. This year will have the lowest increase of 1.97%
  - A surplus will be added to the general fund to be used for capital projects and mill rate relief.

- The Town will continue look for efficiency in local government.
- The Sustainability Committee will now have direct support by the Town Manager's Office as of July 1, 2026.
- The Town Manager thanked the Council for all the important work that they do for the Town.

- **Simsbury Public Library:** Updates were provided by Director Miceli:
  - Over 300 people attended the Pride Picnic. It was a great success.
  - Summer Reading Program begins June 22nd: This year's theme is Simsbury Shines.
  - The Strategic Survey has closed and analysis has begun. Primary results yield that people shared that they want to live in a friendly, supportive, helpful, and inclusive community. Results will be shared with the Board of Selectmen and the Council.
  - A Little Free Food Panty will be available at the Library. Food donations will be collected for people to take as needed. The concept is similar to Free Libraries that are around town.
- **Board of Education Equity Council:** Updates were provided by Dr. Batchelar:
  - June 17th: SHS seniors will participate in Grad Walks at their elementary schools.
  - June 18th: SHS graduation
  - June 19th: A portion of the professional development for Simsbury Public Schools staff on June 19th will be learning about Juneteenth, how it represents the freedom of Black Americans, and the end of slavery in this country. The professional development will honor its significance and focus on inclusion. In addition, restorative practice professional development will be provided with representatives from each of the seven schools.

Co-Chair Updates:

- At the last Council meeting, information regarding two potential candidates to fill the one vacancy was provided to members. Juan Carlos Aguilar organized an online voting process and shared the results. The Council voted to appoint the candidate with the most votes to fill the vacancy.
- Co-Chair Rose Vigdal moved for Abigail Vacca to fill the Council vacancy. Juan Carlos Aguilar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Item:

- Ed LaMontagne moved to accept the minutes from the May 4, 2026 meeting, as presented. Carol Clark-Flanagan seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz abstained.

New Business:

- Juneteenth Discussion:
  - We are prepared to have a great evening of music, performers, vendors, food trucks, and fireworks. We have surpassed our fundraising goal for the event.
  - The event is being publicized on the radio, bill boards, and social media.

- Volunteers to help with the event are still needed. If interested, please notify Dr. Batchelar.
- Selectwoman Yeisley and Town Manager Nelson are working with the Fire Chief in attempts to seek permission for Juneteenth to use the stage that will be used during SHS Graduation. Anyone who supports these efforts are encouraged to reach out to Selectwoman Yeisley and Town Manager Marc Nelson.
- Lawn signs to publicize the event are available and can be displayed on Town property two weeks prior to the event and private property (with permission) at anytime.

- 350th Anniversary of King Phillip's War Discussion: November is Native American History Month. This year, we should be respectful and honor the history of King Phillip's War and the direct impact it had on the Indigenous tribes in Simsbury. A request to facilitate a Let's Talk to honor Indigenous people in November by Natalie Montoria Barnes, Programs Manager for the DEI Institute at Williams College was made. The Council should consult with the Historical Society to consider collaborating on this event.
- The Council is interested in hosting this event. Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz will be the point person from the Council to work directly with Cassie Taylor to organize this event. A motion was made to sponsor and start planning a November event to honor 350th Anniversary of King Phillip's War by Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz. Juan Carlos Aguilar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

- Simsbury Civic Forum Update
  - Suggestions for the topic and structure of the first forum were discussed. The preference is to have a local topic rather than a national topic. A discussion was held regarding the type of conversations to facilitate: information sessions or collaborative conversations regarding topics that people have diverse opinions.
  - The first forum will be held on September 15th from 6:30 – 8:00 P.M. in the Tariffville Room in the Simsbury Public Library facilitated by Braver Angels.
- Honor Flight Recap & Adopt DEI Council Logo: Juan Carlos Aguilar moved to table the two items to the next meeting. Lydia Tedone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn:

- Juan Carlos Aguilar moved to adjourn the meeting. Leah Pitfield seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m. by a unanimous vote.

Simsbury

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council