Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council

Regular Meeting
October 5, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

MINUTES (AMENDED)

Call to Order:

- The Council was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Roll Call:

- Committee Members: Chair Rose Vigdal, Meg Evans, Carol Clark-Flanagan, Leah Pitfield, Abigail Vacca, Lydia Tedone, Chari Chester Anderson, Vice Chair Mala Matacin (virtual), Juan Carlos Aguilar (virtual)

- Liaisons: Head of Adult Services Chris Carney, Director of Equity and Access Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor

Liaison Reports:

- **Simsbury Public Library:** Head of Adult Services Carney reported on the Library events:
  - The Simsbury Public Library partnered with Grass Roots for their Sweet Social Connections. It was a success and all participants had a great time. They are looking to do a spring activity involving a dance party.
  - The Simsbury Public Library is participating in the Laptop ConneCT Program. It is sponsored by the State Library and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The purpose of the program is to deliver up to date laptops for 5 years including set up, training, and technology support. Applicants must meet criteria to be eligible for this program.
  - The 3rd Annual Comfort and Joy campaign is coming up. The Simsbury Public Library will collaborate with For All Ages to collect and distribute various holiday cards to distribute throughout the community.
- **Board of Education Equity Council:** Dr. Batchelor reported that SHS had the first pep rally of the year. To be more inclusive, clubs were celebrated along with the Athletic Departments. Professional Development will be held on November 3rd for certified staff. A session on taking care of aging parents will be held. A recommendation for a guest speaker to help facilitate one hour discussion on strategies and support available for individuals in this phase of life was made.

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Chair Updates:

- A discussion regarding the Board of Finance FY2026 Annual Report was held. Events that will be highlighted will include (yet are not limited to): Honor Flight, Human Library, Pride Picnic, Annual Comfort and Joy cards, Juneteenth, and planning for the Civic Forum.
- There are two vacancies on the Council. The positions need to be filled with one Democrat and one Republican member. Current applications are registered as unaffiliated, which there are no open positions at this time. The Council vacancies will be posted on the Town website and the DEI Council social media page. If the positions are not filled by next Civic Forum, they will be advertised at that time.
- The Council, by unanimous consent, recommended that the Board of Selectmen appoint Eden Weisberg.

Action Item:

- A motion was made to accept the September 9, 2026 minutes by Carol Clark-Flanagan. Meg Evans seconded the motion and offered a friendly amendment to remove the vote on the resignation of Co-Chair Cheryl Cook. A discussion was held. The vote to approve the motion with the correction passed unanimously. Chari Chester Anderson abstained.

New Business:

- A discussion was held regarding the 2027 Human Library. Available dates for March, April, and May were shared. It was agreed that the event will be held on Saturday March 20, 2027. Suggestions for potential books are welcome. It was suggested that feedback regarding potential book ideas be gathered at the Civic Forum events.
- Carol Clark-Flanagan will follow up with Cassie Taylor regarding the 350th Anniversary of King Philip's War Update (Let's Talk for Native American Heritage Month). Information regarding the event that will be held on November 8th will be shared with the Library so the event can be publicized.
- The Social Justice League Network is meeting on November 7th. The Council was invited to attend and become members of the league. Members are encouraged to attend the zoom meeting to learn more about the Network.
- A motion to begin each meeting with a recognition of a Land Acknowledgment was made by Carol Clark-Flanagan. Lydia Tedone seconded the motion. A discussion was held to discuss the purpose and frequency of sharing the Land Acknowledgment to start the Council meetings. The vote to approve the motion passed unanimously. Dr. Batchelor provided a Land Acknowledgement from Simsbury and Vice Chair Mala shared one from Ohio.

Old Business:

- A written summary of the Civic Forum was provided by Rick Bush. Approximately 40 people attended, there were 7 table hosts/guides, and 3 residents of Simsbury were on the panel. 93% of respondents want to stay involved in the Civic Forums. Several attendees volunteered to assist with future planning. The room format and set up worked well. Suggestions for next time include gathering a photo release or providing a statement.

- Chari Chester Anderson shared an update on the potential of creating a 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization. A discussion was held regarding the Town and DEI Council involvement if the 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization was created.

Adjourn:

- Carol Clark-Flanagan moved to adjourn the meeting. Meg Evans seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m. by a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting:

- November 2, 2026, 6:00 P.M., Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library