Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council

Regular Meeting
November 2, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

MINUTES

Call to Order: The Council was called to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call:

- Committee Members: Chair Rose Vigdal, Vice Chair Mala Matacin, Carol Clark-Flanagan, Leah Pitfield, Abigail Vacca, Lydia Tedone (Virtual), Chari Chester Anderson, Juan Carlos Aguilar, Student Representative Yusra Ali, Chari Chester Anderson, Devonna Hall

- Liaisons: Head of Adult Services Chris Carney (Virtual), Director of Equity and Access Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor, Town Manager Marc Nelson, Management Specialist Franklyn Barrueco, Selectwoman Diana Yeisley

- Volunteer: Rick Brush

Liaison Reports:

- Board of Selectmen: Selectwoman Yeisley spoke about the fiscal year end surplus, revenue and expenditure savings, Selectmen-approved year end saving requests, capital project funding, recently passed veteran's tax exemption and the Charter Revision ballot question. She urged the Council to begin identifying budget requests for the next fiscal year immediately.

- Town Manager's Office: Manager Nelson spoke about the mill rate, tax increases, projected negative Grand List growth, deferred capital project costs, his upcoming FY28 recommended budget, and Eno Memorial Hall strategy.

- Simsbury Public Library: Head Carney reported:
    - The part-time Adult Services Librarian interviews have been completed with an offer expected shortly.
    - The part-time Children's Services Assistant job posting is expected soon.

- The Library will have a delayed opening on November 12th (11 A.M.) due to a staff training development session.
- This Thursday at 7 P.M., there will be a Thanksgiving event (Food for Thought) in partnership with the Historical Society.
- The Library is accepting Holiday Card Drive submissions on both floors (children's room mailbox and upstairs near information desk) from November 15th through December 9th. He mentioned that cards should be left unsealed for review, For All Ages will sort and distribute after the 9th, and final counts will be reported at the January meeting.
- The Human Library (March 20th) event is booked for 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. in the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library Room and Weatogue Room for debrief.
- The 350th Anniversary of King Philip's War Update (Let's Talk for Native American Heritage Month - Simsbury DEI Let's Talk Series: From Massacoe to Simsbury) is scheduled for Sunday, November 8th at 2 P.M. in the Friends of the Library Program Room. Head Carney confirmed eighteen (18) registrations thus far.

- Board of Education Equity Council: Dr. Batchelor reported:
  - Students are not in school on Veterans Day (November 11th) and BOE staff are in all-day professional development covering restorative practices and department meetings in the afternoon.
  - Gathering sessions were introduced based on quarterly poll survey results, which replaced end-of-year surveys and the first session addresses staff stress related to caring for aging family members and loss.
  - High school seniors are selecting books and reading days to kindergarten/first-grade students at their former elementary schools during free periods for the Senior book tour program.
  - The Muslim Student Association (MSA) is rebranding and considering expanding to a broader South Asian and Arab student group to increase membership. Yusra spoke about a student prayer space in teachers' rooms and exploring expansion into the library.

Chair(s) Update:

- Carol noted that the Council did not perform a land acknowledgment. The Council discussed formally adopting a land acknowledgement. She read the land acknowledgement from Miss Porter's School. Selectwoman Yeisley offered to reconnect with an individual who did a land acknowledgement ceremony at the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge. The Council discussed drafting a land acknowledgement and Yusra suggested potentially involving the high school Social Studies Honor Society.
- The Chairs mentioned that recommended new member Eden Weisberg's appointment is scheduled for Selectmen consideration on November 9th and provided an overview of the Council's FY2026 Board of Finance Annual Report submission.

Town of Simsbury DEI Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2026

Review and Approve October 5, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes: Vice Chair Matacin moved to approve the minutes, amended to add the recommendation by the Council, to the Selectmen, to appoint Eden Weisberg to the Council. Juan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chari abstaining.

New Business:

- For All Ages 2026 Comfort & Joy Holiday Card Drive: By unanimous consent, the Council agreed to move this item last on the agenda.
- 350th Anniversary of King Philip's War Update (Let's Talk for Native American Heritage Month): The Chairs and Head Carney discussed the logistics of this event further.
- Adopt 2027 Regular Meeting Schedule: The Council discussed the proposed schedule. Chari moved to approve the schedule amended to remove the August meeting. Leah seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

- Simsbury Civic Forum Update: Volunteer Brush highlighted aspects of the event. The Forum generated a volunteer follow-up group of nine (9) participants who want to continue discussing and developing recommendations for increasing civic engagement. Potential topics for the next forum include: voting and civic connection, housing and development, and property taxes.
- 2027 Human Library Discussion: Vice Chair Matacin and Head Carney discussed logistics regarding the event.
- 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization Discussion: The Council discussed a fiscal sponsor for the event. The Council considered alternatives such as creating a nonprofit organization. The Council identified multiple fiscal agent candidates. After a brief discussion, the Council agreed to partner with an existing nonprofit organization to serve as the fiscal agent for the 2027 Juneteenth Celebration. The Council agreed to have potential new member Eden Weisberg work on researching potential fiscal agents.
- Adopt DEI Council Logo: The Council discussed the logo. Chari moved to adopt the logo, amended to position the wheelchaired individual more toward the center, balancing the font size between "Simsbury" and "DEI Council," and forming a more complete circle with the bottom text. Juan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Carol abstaining.

Adjourn: Chari moved to adjourn the meeting. Carol seconded the motion. The meeting portion was adjourned at 7:36 P.M. by a unanimous vote. The Council worked on the Holiday Card Drive.