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

AGENDA

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Land Acknowledgment

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. Council Update
    b. FY2026 Board of Finance Annual Report Update

4) Review and Approve October 5, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

5) New Business
    a. For All Ages 2026 Comfort & Joy Holiday Card Drive
    b. 350th Anniversary of King Philip's War Update (Let's Talk for Native American Heritage Month)
    c. Adopt 2027 Regular Meeting Schedule

6) Old Business
    a. Simsbury Civic Forum Update
    b. 2027 Human Library Discussion
    c. 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization Discussion
    d. Adopt DEI Council Logo

Adjourn
Next Meeting: December 7, 2026, 6:00 P.M., Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library

TOWN OF SIMSBURY BOARD OF FINANCE FY 2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Department or Board/Commission

Simsbury DEI Council

Mission Statement/Overview

Launched in September, 2019, the Simsbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council (formerly known as the Simsbury SPIRIT Council) represents the community at-large and serves as Diversity Champions to help Simsbury become more inclusive - fostering awareness, action, and a community where all voices are welcome and each and every individual can live, work, learn, and play in a safe environment with meaningful and healthy relationships.

FY 2025-2026 Adopted Budget

$4,500 (actual dollars spent: $3,600 with $900 in surplus going to the general fund)

FY 2025-2026 Full-Time Equivalent Positions or Number of Volunteers

15 Council members with 10-20 volunteers depending on the event

FY 2025-2026 Initiatives/Accomplishments

November 3, 2025: *FOR ALL AGES, 2025 Comfort and Joy Holiday Card Drive*. The Council, partnering with the Simsbury Public Library, signed over two hundred (200) cards that were given to the Library to be distributed to various groups of veterans and chronically ill adults across our state.

February 2, 2026: *Holocaust Remembrance Day*. The Council partnered with the Library for this event where author Rabbi Philip Lazowski lectured about his book, Transforming Darkness into Light.

March 28, 2026: *Human Library*. The Council organized this event to help our community "unjudge someone." Thirteen (13) human books were available to be "checked out" for meaningful and honest conversations. The Council completed a comprehensive event review report which was sent to Copenhagen where the main Human Library is located.

May 16, 2026: *Honor Flight Connecticut*. The Council hosted this event on Armed Forces Day highlighting the non-profit Honor Flight program dedicated to transporting local veterans to Washington D.C. to visit the memorials built in their honor.

June 1, 2026: *Pride Picnic*. Co-sponsoring the event with the Library, Senior Center, and Social Services, the Council celebrated the affirmation of LGBTQ+ identities, promoted visibility, acceptance, and equality.

June 20, 2026: *6th Annual Juneteenth Celebration*. Multi town (Simsbury, Avon, Farmington, and Granby) community event recognizing the 161st anniversary of Juneteenth when enslaved people in Texas were finally informed that they were free more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Over two thousand (2,000) attendees at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center with live music, food, activities, and fireworks. The event was filmed by Simsbury Community Media and can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJWsyQNou60.

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

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.

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-Flannagan. 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 Chari 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.

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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

Barrueco Franklyn

From: Rose Vigdal <rosevigdal@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 6, 2026 8:44 PM
To: Abigail Vacca; Carney Christopher; Carol Clark-Flanagan; Cassandra Taylor; Chari Chester Anderson; Devonna Hall; Ed LaMontagne; Evans Meg; Juan Carlos Aguilar; Leah Pitfield; Lydia Tedone; Mala Matacin; Rick Brush; Rose Vigdal; Tayarisha Batchelor; Yeisley Diana; Yesenia; Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz; Yusra Ali
Cc: Barrueco Franklyn
Subject: DEI_Nov. 2nd Meeting_Greeting Cards

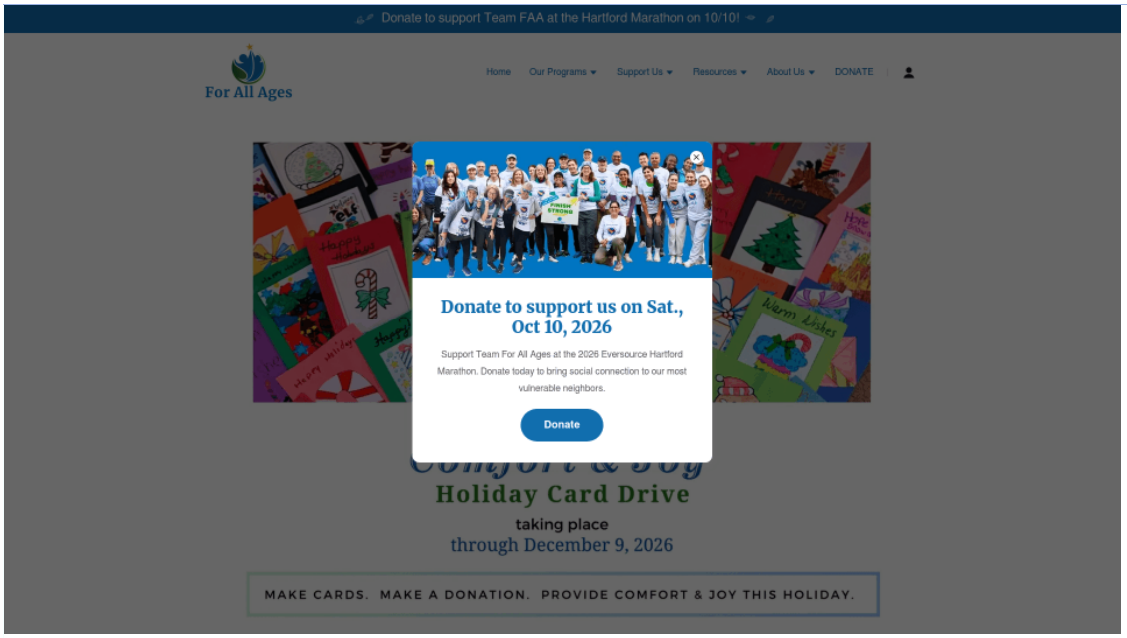
Warning: Unusual link
This message contains an unusual link, which may lead to a malicious site. Confirm the message is safe before clicking any links.

Hi Everyone,
For our November meeting we are joining the library in their FOR ALL AGES, 2026 Comfort and Joy Holiday Card Drive. We are asking that you bring a box of cards **(16 or 24 or more cards)** to share as we willbe signing them and giving them to the library to be distributed to various groups of veterans and chronically ill adults across our state.

Here are the guidelines of this event:
Keep your notes/cards cheerful and joyful - see greeting ideas below.
Envelopes are not required but if you include envelopes, please do not seal them.
Do *not* include last name/identifiable personal information in your card (first name only!).
Do *not* include religious or predictive sayings inside the cards (for example, "I'm praying for you; get well soon; keep getting stronger).
Avoid using supplies that can create health concerns (for example, glitter).
Do not include food/candy in your card as these will be discarded.

Examples of holiday greetings:
Wishing you a happy holiday season and a peaceful New Year.
Season's greetings!
Warm wishes for the holiday season.
May your holidays be filled with love and laughter!
Wishing you all the joy, peace, and love that this time of year brings.
I hope you have a delightful holiday season.
Wishing you a joyous holiday season.
Best wishes for a festive season!
Sending holiday cheer to you.
May your holidays shine bright!

Here is the link to learn more:
https://forallages.org/comfort-and-joy-cards



For All Ages

Creating a more human world

FORALLAGES.ORG
10/6/2026, 8:17:52 PM

GENERATED BY
GMAIL URL LINK PREVIEW BY CLOUDHQ

Amazon is a great place to purchase bulk greeting cards at a reasonable price. We'll bring in the holiday spirit a few weeks early, together!
Thanks,
Rose

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Marc S. Nelson, MPA

MEMORANDUM

To: Trish Munroe, Town Clerk
From: Franklyn Barrueco, Management Specialist
cc: Rose Vigdal, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council Chair
Mala Matacin, DEI Council Vice Chair
Date: November 2, 2026
Subject: DEI Council 2027 Regular Meeting Schedule

DEI Council meetings will be held monthly beginning in January, except for July, on the first Monday at 6:00 P.M. with exceptions noted below.

Meeting dates are as follows:

January 4, 2027
February 1, 2027
March 1, 2027
April 5, 2027
May 3, 2027
June 7, 2027
August 2, 2027
September 8, 2027 (first Wednesday due to Labor Day)
October 4, 2027
November 1, 2027
December 6, 2027

The meetings will be held in a location to be determined or virtually. Meetings will be properly noticed in accordance with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

DRAFT

Simsbury

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council