

## **Minutes- Hardwick Equity Committee Meeting**

6:00 pm, Monday August 2, 2021

Hardwick Municipal Building

Present: Ceilidh, Audrey, Lucian, Rutu, Chip, David, Beth (notes)

Community member attendee: Bill Chidsey

### **Action Steps:**

- Read through chapter 8 of "How to be An Antiracist" for next meeting
- Ceilidh will find out when the next Downtown Commission meeting will be held, in case any HEC member wants to attend
- Chip will reach out to Wiz Dow re: local Abenaki people who may want to be involved in some way (town website -see below)
- Rutu will reach out to the Abenaki tribe to get a clearer understanding of what they'd like to see happen re: what info gets published on the website & any other pertinent info we should be aware of, including what holidays they might want included on the calendar (see below)
- Lucian will contact CAE to determine where they got the info posted at Atkins Field & how we might connect with the diversity within the farming community
- Lucian will reorganize the town website google doc to make it more easily shareable
- Ceilidh will find out what trainings the town departments have already had re: inclusivity, equity, etc.
- Chip will reach out to Xusanna Davis re: the status of the training she's helping put together
- Rutu will put together a calendar of holidays to recognize different holidays different groups of people celebrate
- David will contact the Peace & Justice Center re: trainings

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

### **Minutes from June meeting:**

- Audrey motions to approve as submitted, Ceilidh seconds; approved as submitted

### **Public Comments:**

Bill Chidsey, early childhood in upstate NY w/migrant-worker camp on the farm, grew up with many POC at home; has strong feelings of respect and equality with others as a result; may be interested in long-term involvement with HEC

- Fear of each other creates so many problems

### **Discussion of "How to be An Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi:**

- With Lucian & Rutu looking at the website, reading this book seems pertinent -having a clear statement of inclusion would be helpful; town policies are not talking specifically about inclusion/equality, which could change to include active anti-racist statements
- Recognition that we as white people don't fully understand or consider the diversity within the group generally referred to as "Black" -there's a very broad range of ethnicity that gets overlooked
- Helpful to learn the multiple approaches that people have towards "managing" people fitting into the US culture & the negative effects of assimilation (and even just the assumptions & expectations that people *should* assimilate to the current culture)
- Having difficult concepts explained in a way that is easy to understand is very helpful
- The purposeful divide to maintain power -pitting the poor Black & white communities against each other by the wealthy class was a very effective tactic

-So many people have internalized so much of the concepts, fears and issues created around the idea of different races and corresponding hierarchies and it infuses so many aspects of our lives; it takes A Lot of work to undo it

\*Read through chapter 8 for next meeting

### **Downtown Commission Banner:**

-Goal to support the downtown designation of Hardwick; a group of business's working to make it happen; support the swinging bridge event; wrote a grant to have a banner project highlighting the "people of the community" -how might we make that inclusive? Banners are to be hung along the light posts along Main Street

### **Town Website:**

-Equity meeting is now on the town calendar  
-Having the Equity Resolution more prominent so people looking at the site know where we stand -is a prominent link on the front page enough or having the actual statement in a prominent place?  
-The Select Board is working on a Vision Statement for the town -how involved does the HEC want to be in the drafting of this document?  
-Including Abenaki history in the "History" page; Local Abenaki community, Wiz Dow (from Hardwick Historical Society) may know who to contact locally -can they (HHS; Abenaki tribe) take this on or should we?  
Pre-founding of Hardwick through the present. Chip will reach out to Wiz  
-"...unceded land of the Abenaki people" included on site -would this be okay with the Abenaki community?; Rutu will reach out directly to the Abenaki tribe  
-Perhaps the Hardwick Gazette would print a historical write up re: Abenaki history?  
-Pavilion at Atkins Field includes some info re: Abenaki history -Lucian will contact CAE about where they got the info -where we might go to find what we're looking for; also about connecting to the diversity within the farming community  
-Social media presence of the town: when statements are released, going out to a broader audience (FPF, Facebook, etc); how can the town be more active in reaching out to the community (vs just posting things on the website, which may not get much traffic)? This would likely be something the Select Board would have to discuss beforehand -who's responsibility to keep things updated? Do any policies need to be in place?  
-"Organizations & Churches" changed to "Organization & Places of Worship" to be more inclusive of religious/spiritual perspectives  
-Lucian will reorganize the google doc to make it more easily shareable

### **Possible Trainings for town employees and volunteers:**

-Lucian is still waiting for information from specific groups, he'll have more info at the next meeting  
-USDA Rural Development may have trainings available as well; what kind of trainings are appropriate for town employees & volunteers?  
-Ceilidh will find out what trainings the town departments have already had  
-Xusanna Davis -is she available to talk w/people? What would we want the discussion to be about? Would she have something to recommend? What's the status of the training she's helping put together? Chip will reach out to her  
-Bor Yang, executive director of the VT Human Rights Commission -she may also be a good contact/resource  
-Peace & Justice Center -would they have any trainings? David will contact  
-What are other towns Equity Committies doing? Can we include other towns in the trainings? Lucian will contact someone in Craftsbury, Ceilidh will reach out to Woodbury; Where are other Equity Committies? What other towns might be interested in participating?

**Celebrations:**

To recognize different holidays different groups of people celebrate & putting a statement out to the public, Rutu will put together a calendar of holidays that could be included (are there Abenaki holidays that could be included? Rutu will ask when she contacts them)

**Miscellaneous:**

-What the Black Panthers brought to the conversation was ahead of their time -many aspects of modern life for everyone (ex: free school lunches) originate from the Black Panther Party movement and values

Book recommendations: "White Rage"; "Sum of Us"

**Next Steps & Meeting Schedule:**

-Book discussion, then Education, Policy, Community – do we still want to do that? What do you want to see on the agenda for next month? Keep thinking about things and bring ideas to the committee

**New Business:**

-no new business

**Old Business:**

-no old business

Meeting adjourned 7:37 pm

Next regular meeting: Tuesday, September 7, 6pm, at Hardwick Municipal Building

Items for September meeting: Elect new Treasurer; Discuss any progress with holiday calendar; Policy- Rutu & Lucian: review thoughts about Hardwick website & open discussion; including something about healthcare & housing in our mission? Chat about book reading;