

**Diversity Council Regular Meeting**  
Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 6:30pm  
**Hybrid In-Person and Zoom Meeting**  
Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 N. Main St., Bristol, CT

**Attendees:** Marcus Patton – Interim Chair, Council Members Sandra Kamens, David Rackliffe, Jeff Israel (Zoom), and Lopes (Zoom), and City Council Member, Mark Dickau (Zoom)

**Absent:** Council Member Jordan Lopez

**Guest:** David Haberfeld, Bristol's West End Association

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Council Member Patton at 6:32pm. A quorum was present.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**a. August 27, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Interim Chair Patton requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the August 27, 2024 meeting. Council Member Rackliffe made the motion, and it was seconded by Council Member Kamens. There were no changes or corrections to the Minutes. All were in favor and the Minutes passed into the record.

**3. Public Participation**

There was no Public Participation.

**4. Current Business**

**a. City Obligations**

**b. Current City Groups & Diversity Council Overlap**

Interim Chair Patton reviewed the discussion held at the previous month's Diversity Council Meeting. Mayor Caggiano was invited to tonight's meeting but had a schedule conflict and wouldn't be able to attend. The Interim Chair and the Mayor were able to meet prior to tonight's meeting. The following notes are from that meeting.

- **Funding:** The Mayor has chosen not to fund any Board or Commission during his administration.
- **Fundraising & Grants:** The Council can fundraise and apply for grant money. The Mayor advised that the Council can reach out to Dr. Dawn Leger as the city's Grant Administrator as a resource.
- **The City's Responsibilities to the Diversity Council in terms of support:** The city is will and can work with the Council in many areas, but there are no responsibilities that

the Council can demand or expect in terms of defined support. There was mention of providing an interpreter for events if needed.

- Resources the Council would forfeit if they became a Task Force: None. The Mayor advised that as a Task Force, the group wouldn't need to adhere to post meetings, adhere to FOIA rules, Posting Agendas, Minutes and Reports. As a Task Force, the guidelines that apply to holding a City meeting wouldn't apply.

The Interim Chair noted that the Mayor has intentionally moved a lot of Councils like the Diversity Council into Task Forces because of the benefits to being a Task Force and his organization of how the city operates. It was also noted that the work of several city organizations overlap.

For example, Bristol Parks and Rec and Arts & Culture which is now part of Park and Rec with many events held at Rockwell Theater inside the Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School. Interim Chair Patton noticed that there are several similarities with the Diversity Council and Arts and Culture. The Mayor had advised that there have been several councils and groups like the Diversity Council that have joined together with a shared goal rather than operating separately.

The Interim Chair also noted that if the Diversity Council moves forward as they are and applies for grants or wants to fundraise or accept donations, the Council would be required to go before the City Council for their approval. This approval would not be needed if the Council moved to operate as a Task Force.

Further discussion included meeting with Josh Maderios as the Director of Parks and Rec and inviting him to speak with the Council, and the availability of funding if they Council moved under Arts and Culture. Council Member Kamens is in favor of the Council moving to a Task Force. Council Member Lopes spoke of short term and long-term plans through this and into the next administration. He wants to ensure they're able to keep their mission viable and helpful to Bristol's residents.

## **5. New Business**

### **a. Information on Task Force (Guest David Haberfeld: West End Assoc.)**

Interim Chair Patton introduced David Haberfeld to the Council. Mr. Haberfeld spoke to the benefits and challenges of leading a Task Force. The West End Association does a great job of marketing their events and draw in both attendees and volunteers.

Mr. Haberfeld shared best practices that have worked for the West End Association such as the format of their resources. He described a core group of officers who commit to regular meetings with another group that will help with specific events, and then another that will help with any additional tasks or events when contacted.

He also described a low investment fundraiser idea of partnering with a local bar or restaurant to hold a drink and appetizers type event on one of their slower nights. This brings in funds for the business as well as funds for the Task Force. He believes

that offering pizza or food for a panel discussion would bring more folks in and funds raised at other events could pay for the amenities. He suggested researching what works for other organizations and also be careful to not oversaturate the area with similar types of events.

Another idea is for the Council to align themselves with a positive initiative or mission in the city and provide public support for that effort. He cited the example of the West End Association championing for the West End Realignment project. Mr. Haberfeld advised that when the group is marketing their various events, the key is to network with the top 10 best influencers in the city for the city in addition to social media.

When it comes to spending the funds raised, the Association will hold a meeting if the spending is projected to be over a set limit. There is freedom to choose what aspects of your mission you want to fund. Discussion continued around obtaining a 501c3 status which is beneficial to both the Task Force and also the person or organization donating as it is a tax-free donation.

Interim Chair Patton advised that Eric Rosengren has extended his partnership with the Diversity Council through Bristol Talks on Facebook which has a membership of over 35,000 members. Mr. Haberfeld stated that Bristol Talks is a great way to get the word out in the city.

The Interim Chair advised that one of the requirements of the Council remaining under the city is to have a balance of political party representation. Adding the Diversity Equity and Inclusion aspect then brings politics in which can be a deterrent to their mission. Further discussion was had regarding additional freedoms or hurdles if they became a task force, those interested in leading the group going forward, and the need to choose the direction of the Council to drive the next steps such as finding their core group and fellow supporters. One of the interests expressed is to celebrate people's differences and bring people together for that purpose.

*Mayor Caggiano joined the meeting at 7:33pm.*

Council Member Israel expressed the need for more discussion on the direction of the Council before a decision is made. Council Member Lopes appreciated Mr. Haberfeld's presentation and ideas and the seed thoughts for the Council.

Mayor Caggiano took time to answer Council Member questions for clarification on the funding for the Arts and Culture events as it would relate to the Council if they pursued joining under them. The Mayor also supported the Council in their mission of bringing people together, and suggested the Community Conversations piece which is being run under Arts and Culture.

Council Member Lopes expressed concern about the uptick of missing teens from the city and his hopes that it's not related to any racially or illegally motivated actions. Mayor Caggiano was able to advise that he pursued this with the Bristol Police

Department about these incidents and was advised that it has been teens choosing to leave home and not from any nefarious actions.

**b. Possible name change to Diversity Council**

The Interim Chair advised the Council that a possible change to the name of the Council will be discussed. The goal is to come up with a name that can best express what is at the core of mission. Other topics for future meetings are event ideas and recruitment of new members.

**6. Adjournment**

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Member Kamens and seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego  
Recording Secretary