City of Bristol
Diversity Council

INFORMATION TO ACCESS THIS MEETING
https://bristolct-gov.zoom.us/j/82946776934?pwd=cEVOUnVJaExGQlF3WFhHak1JZUJ3dz09

Meeting ID: 829 4677 6934
Passcode: 346884

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The regular Diversity Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 6:30pm in Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 North Main Street, Bristol, Connecticut.

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

   a. Minutes from the January 28, 2025 Regular Meeting

III. Public Participation

IV. Council attendance and introductions

V. Current Business

   a. Operating under City of Bristol umbrella vs Task Force or similar

VI. New Business

   a. Diversity Council Event:Safe Spaces - A Bristol Community Meet and Greet (Meet Your Neighbors)

   b. When? March, April or May?

   c. Format?

   d. Facilitators

VII. Notable Events, News and Notes

VIII. Adjournment

PER ORDER OF THE INTERIM CHAIR

Diversity Council Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 6:30pm

Hybrid Meeting: In-Person and on Zoom

Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 N. Main St., Bristol, CT

Attendees: Marcus Patton – Interim Chair, Council Members Sandra Kamens, Tony Lopes (Zoom), Dave Rackliffe, and Jeff Israel

Absent: City Council Member, Mark Dickau

Guest: None

1. **Call to Order**
   The Interim Chair called the meeting to order at 6:36pm. A quorum was present.

2. **Approval of Minutes**
   a. **Minutes from the November 26, 2024 Regular Meeting**
   The Interim Chair called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the November 26, 2024 Regular Meeting. Council Member Rackliffe made the motion to approve the minutes, and the motion 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**
   Attending members of the public introduced themselves as follows:
   Rachael D'Agostino, Bishop Street, Bristol
   Nancy Grover, Lawrence Lane, Bristol
   Sgt. Demond Wilson, Bristol Police Dept.
   Lt. Jason Warner, Bristol Police Dept.

   The officers are working to liaison with various city councils and the Bristol Police Department. Ms. D'Agostino and Ms. Grover heard of the Council at the Community Conversation held on January 21, 2025. They're interested in learning more about the Council and becoming involved.

4. **Current Business**
   a. **January Events Recap**
   - The Soul Session – January 18th
     Council Member Israel provided a description of the event which he attended as a volunteer. Live art was painted on stage and given to someone in attendance as a prize, and a number of visual artists had displays both on the first and upper floor. The event ran from 6pm to 9:30pm with a meet and greet time ahead of the 6pm start. Council Member Israel also advised that the Billy Joel Tribute event was taking place on February 1, 2025.

Unapproved

- MLK – January 20th
  The weather prohibited any Council Members from attending the event though it was still held.

- Community Conversation – January 21st
  Interim Chair Marcus attended the event and recognized the potential that it provided. Melina Floyd arranged for and hosted the event at the Bristol Public Library. Ms. Floyd had attended the Diversity Council's November 26, 2024 meeting and presented plans for the meeting to take place after the winter holidays. Discussion followed including details of the event format such as space used, refreshments provided, and takeaways from the experience.

  Takeaways included the Interim Chair's belief that there is a need for, and a space for, the Diversity Council in Bristol. People expressed a lot of emotions and shared various experiences, and they were looking for a place of belonging. The Interim Chair also spoke at the event. As a result, people came up to him asking about the Council and how they could help.

  Interim Chair Patton shared that the need he feels the Council can fill is as a resource. People are looking for assistance in the community. The Council has already been building an active Resource Guide designed to share out to the public. The Guide includes business and city departments, names, numbers, organizations, and celebrations and is designed to be a direct line for the public to those sources. The Interim Chair said he will initially take the lead on the guide. He has also asked Melina Floyd to attend future meetings, and to partner or guide the Council in their own efforts based on her success with the Community Conversation. Networking is key, including designated points of contact for various needs or requests.

b. Upcoming Bristol Events and Celebration (links provided in the online Agenda)
The Council discussed the following upcoming events, most of which are posted on the city's Bristol All Heart website. These are events and resources the Council wanted to highlight for the community to attend as well and as possible volunteer opportunities for Council Members. Discussion of event details followed.

One additional event was mentioned as it was just announced, which is the new Open Mic Night at Creative Jam Art Co. on Riverside Avenue in Bristol. The first Open Mic is February 26, 2025: Open Mic Night The city has also appointed a new Poet Laureate, Tom Lagasse of Bristol. The Open Mic is one of the first events he has put together. Poetry, Music and art are welcome. Open to all ages. Free to attend and participate.

Council Member Israel shared an art event that he's involved with called Under One Roof. The theme this year is Resilience. Each participating group is provided with canvases to creatively share what resilience means to them. The final works are put on display and opens with a cocktail hour. Last year's event theme was Welcoming a Stranger. Council Member Israel would like to see this event repeated in Bristol. Discussion followed.

Unapproved

Highlighted events:

Community Conversation: A Funny Look at Depression and Suicide
Downtown Live at Rockwell Theatre on 1/25 at 6pm

Philip Jenkins: Historical African American Bristolite. Repaired clocks for Pres. Jimmy Carter
Bristol Public Library on 2/1 at 10am

World Interfaith Harmony Week
Asbury United Methodist Church on 2/3 at 630pm

Poet Talk with Bristol resident, Sharon Arsego
Bristol Public Library on 2/11 at 630pm

Carousel Museum Gatsby Party
New England Carousel Museum on 2/15 at 7pm

Black History Celebration
Bridge Community Church on 2/22 at 630pm

Free Courses to Citizenship, Women's Workforce Empowerment, Blood Drives etc.
https://bristolallheart.com/events/

5. **New Business**

   a. **Solidifying Our Role as a Resource Hub**
      - Reactivate the Resource List
      - Bristol Resource Groups (BRGs)
        - Business
        - Culture
        - Education
        - Entertainment
        - Faith

Interim Chair Patton provided additional takeaways from his experience at the Community Conversation held on 1/21. Among his notes were how many people in attendance are working independently in various areas of the community, and there is overlap. He believes the foundation of the Diversity Council would be to serve as a resource to connect the community and the efforts being made within it.

Discussion took place regarding building pillars and a network of people to serve as contacts for specific areas and/or concerns. The consensus was that the Council would host a community conversation of its own, with a key focus on making it a safe space for everyone to share their experiences and needs. During this event, the Council would like to have a network in place whereby someone presenting a need or asking for guidance on, or in, a particular area (business, faith, health, etc.) would be provided with a point of contact and/or an immediate resource to reference while at the meeting. The logistics of such an event will be discussed in

Unapproved

more detail at the next meeting. It was noted that an organized, well planned and inclusive event will be key to the it being effective and impactful.

Marketing such an event will take effort, and the Council will look to employ similar, if not the same, avenues used to promote the January 21st event due to the success of the attendance at it. Recruitment to the Council was also discussed, as more members are needed. Political affiliation and the requirement of party balance among the council was in question and will be confirmed through the Town Clerk's Office. Interim Chair Patton encouraged anyone with questions about membership to reach out to him to discuss the next steps in that process.

6. Adjournment

With no further discussion, Interim Chair Patton called for an adjournment. The motion was seconded by Council Member Rackliff and the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary

Unapproved