

Diversity Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 25, 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, and David Rackliffe

Absent: City Council Member, Mark Dickau, and Council Member Jeff Israel

Guests: None

I. Call to Order

The Interim Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes from the February 25, 2025 Regular Meeting

Interim Chair Patton called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the February 25, 2025 Regular Meeting. Council Member Kamens noted a typo where it should say Voices of Hope it says Vices of Hope. The motion to approve the minutes with the correction was made by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

III. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

IV. Council attendance and introductions

V. Current Business

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

Interim Chair Patton reviewed the previous meetings overall discussion of the Diversity Council either moving to a Task Force or remaining under the city. He called on Council Member Lopes to offer his input on the decision. Council Member Lopes expressed his approval to move to a Task Force noting that the energy for success, the chance to grow in members and funding options stands with that. With the change to a Task Force, he believes a name change is needed. Discussion followed.

The Interim Chair advised he would need to write a proposal to the mayor to become a Task Force under the Mayor. Some questions remain, including the need for political party representation, that the Interim Chair can bring to the mayor for clarification. The Council did confirm during the meeting that they could raise funds with the Board of Finance's approval while being a mayor's task force. There are residents interested in participating on the Council

and will be contacted when the format of the Council is confirmed. Additional discussion followed.

The Council decided to hold the vote on moving to a mayor's Task Force or remaining under the city until Council Member Israel was present. Discussion followed regarding holding a Special Meeting for the vote, cancelling the scheduled April 2025 meeting, and holding the Community Conversation event that night instead.

Council Member Rackliffe made a motion to move the Community Conversation to April 22, 2025 from 6pm to 7:30pm, and to cancel the regular Diversity Council Meeting previously scheduled for that night to hold the event at that time. The motion was seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

The date and time for the Special Meeting also to be held in April will be determined and communicated to the Council. At that meeting the members will take their vote regarding becoming a Task Force or not.

b. Diversity Council Event:

- Finalize Safe Spaces/Brave Space (Meet & Greet)? Other ideas?
- April/Date to finalize
- Format
- Facilitators

The event will be held April 22, 2025 at 6:00pm at the Bristol Public Library. Discussion to decide the event format, purpose, name, facilitator and marketing followed. The council members will lead with introductions at the event, encouraging people to share or listen, which ever they feel more comfortable doing. Various council members were tasked with logistical aspects of the event including securing a facilitator and creation of a flyer to promote the event. The Council wants this to be a time when Bristol residents can learn about each other to the extent that people are willing to share.

VI. New Business

a. Commitments on partnerships and liaison representation

Interim Chair Patton revisited the partnerships and liaison representation opportunities for the council members. Meetings and Boards to attend include Chamber of Commerce, Bristol Police Department, and city events such as volunteering at Downtown Live events. The Bristol Magazine is coming from two men who already have magazines for other Connecticut towns as well. Discussion of a Bristol photo contest and T-shirt design contest was also discussed. Business cards and council shirts were also discussed.

Council Member Kamens shared an article from the February 20, 2025 Hartford Courant on the benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion. She also reported on the Bristol Hospital Diversity Committee Black History Month presentation. The presenter worked with Coretta Scott King

among other historic figures in the Civil Rights Movement and the vein of Social Justice. The presenter may be someone the council can have at one of their events in the future.

VII. Notable Events, News and Notes

Open Mic Night the last Wednesday of every month from 7pm to 8:30pm with sign ups starting at 6:45pm. The next one is March 26th at Creative Jam Art Co., Riverside Avenue

Hidden Figures movie playing for Free at the Rockwell Theater at BAIMS – March 27th starting at 6pm

VIII. Adjournment

Council Member Kamens made the motion to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary