

# Citizens Committee on Civic Unity

## Meeting Notes

**Committee Meeting**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**  
**12/7/2021, 5:30-7:00 pm**

Attending: Kelly Hassett; Namrata Sengupta; Talia Weisberg, Abhishek Raman; Betsy Bard; Connor Clancy; Eva Martin Blythe; Veronica Ortega; Laura Mosman Smith  
Staff: Taha Jennings, Brian Corr

Started meeting at 5:33

### **General Business**

- **Committee Housekeeping**

- Welcoming new members: Taha and Kelly welcomed people to the meeting and new members to the committee
- Team building: Members shared introductions and the chair introduced and icebreaker activity: Two Truths and a Lie
- Committee members each also answered the question why Civic Unity is important to them (answers summarized below):
  - Opportunity to learn about differences and opinions
  - Personal connection to historic events involving equality issues growing up
  - Past family experience – can understand what a lack of civic unity can lead to
  - Interested in exploring ways and events to engage as a community
  - Sense of responsibility about neighbors
  - Rewarding to promote and support others working towards civic unity
  - Appreciation for Cambridge as a welcoming place, opportunity to be involved and have a voice at the table
  - National events, recognizing own privilege while working to make positive changes
  - Actively working to break down barriers, seeing discrimination/racism up close even in Cambridge
  - Opportunities to bring young people together

- **Upcoming Projects / Strategic Planning**

- Kelly introduced the possibility of bringing in an outside facilitator to help the group with strategic planning, or have a few Committee members take the lead, and Connor and Abhishek volunteered to help.
- Connor explained that Kelly, Taha, Brian, and Connor met last week (and Abhishek had planned to join but had a work conflict come up). That group discussed that it was a great time to do this with many new members, and with people sharing and speaking.
- There are benefits to having members facilitate this effort, as well as benefits by having an outside person. Connor shared his framing:
  - A strategic planning process similar to a roadmap that looks at the issues and what the groups wants to address. Also who it serves over a 2-3 year timeframe. The more challenging questions is what to do about it and what is the capacity to address it – especially for big topics. There may be several specific actions or programs that can address the goal. Also need to look at how can we measure success – and it can be qualitative, not just quantitative.
  - Typically involves at least 5-steps in the process:
    1. Get the right people in the room and do you have outside resources
    2. An information gathering or “mulling over topics” period, and can include readings or speakers
    3. Do the actual retreat – either in 90-minute chunks or all at one – and do true brainstorming and use “design thinking” and then prioritize and decide on what the big issues are and solutions
    4. Refinement period - As time passes people have space to think about the ideas start to come up with ideas and this avoids groupthink that happens in a single session
    5. Get feedback from each other and external stakeholders make sure we are on the right track
- Committee members responded with their thoughts:
  - There are some organizations based in Cambridge that do a lot of this work. At least one committee member stated that they have contacts at an organization which may be able to do it pro bono.
  - Social sector strategy looks different than in the private sector, people often use a logic model to think about inputs and activities.
  - Members were looking for examples to read. One example provided was: [The Center for Social Impact Strategy \(upenn.edu\)](https://csis.upenn.edu/independent-learning/logic-model/) <https://csis.upenn.edu/independent-learning/logic-model/>

- Another link to an article was shared regarding the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cambridge 2030: '[Cambridge 400' aims to widen the city's historical lens \(wickedlocal.com\)](https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/cambridge-chronicle-tab/2021/11/30/cambridge-400-aims-widen-citys-historical-lens/8791319002/)  
<https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/cambridge-chronicle-tab/2021/11/30/cambridge-400-aims-widen-citys-historical-lens/8791319002/>
- Committee members agreed to share ideas by email to the entire committee and think about the timeframe for holding a retreat