

## **City of Cambridge Citizens' Committee on Civic Unity Meeting**

Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 5:30 PM, Cambridge Citywide Senior Center

### **Summarized meeting notes**

#### **Committee members present:**

Betsy Bard, Melissa Castillo, Susie Flug, Renae Gray, Steven Lee, Kenny Likis, Josie Patterson

#### **Staff present:**

Taha Jennings, Brian Corr

#### **Selection of a Chair and Co or Vice Chair**

Taha informed the group that several committee members nominated Susie Flug to chair the committee. Kenny Likis moved that the committee take a vote to elect Susie Flug as chair, which was seconded by Betsy Bard, and the vote among members in attendance was unanimous. Susie accepted the nomination and vote of the group. There was some discussion about the role of the chair and potential co-chair or vice chair. Taha stated that he will send an email to the entire committee explaining that Susie was elected chair, and also asking members for their thoughts on using a co-chair or vice chair; if they were interested in serving that role; and/or if they would like to nominate someone. A vote would be taken at the next meeting.

The group discussed the decision making processes for the committee. It was pointed out that it is important for all members to feel like they have a say, while also giving some deference to committee members actually in attendance. There was general agreement that decisions should be made through consensus with votes taken if necessary. It was also suggested that any guidelines be written down.

There was a question as to whether it is appropriate to consider replacements for absentee members. There was a suggestion that the Chair and Co/Vice chair of the committee check in on members that have missed multiple meetings. Susie stated that she will work to send out a proposed agenda to the committee a week before each meeting.

#### **Event update**

An update was provided regarding the Black History Month Event with the Employees' Committee on Diversity and Central Square Theater. The event will be On Tuesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Central Square Theater, 450 Mass. Ave. at 5:30 PM. The event will include a reception at the beginning and feature several of the actors performing scenes from the current production of "The Convert". The performance will be followed by a moderated discussion with the actors.

The Committee discussed the possibility of creating a Facebook page and a Twitter account. Taha will look into how this would work and be managed, and check to see how it might fit into the overall city policy regarding social media. A committee member also asked about creating an email address specifically for the committee that would go directly to the Chair and Co/Vice Chair.

The Committee also reviewed a draft informational flyer which explained the mission and background of the Civic Unity Committee. The goal is to have copies ready for distribution at the Diversity Committee event.

Susie shared a draft of a community connections list to help members think about spreading the word about the Committee as well as facilitate outreach to other boards and commissions that Civic Unity members might be involved with.

### **Ideas**

One thing that seemed to be missing in the City according to a member, was that there weren't opportunities to build bridges, and certain community events might be able to provide that. A book club was also mentioned as an idea. There was a suggestion to have guest speakers come to committee meetings. One idea was to have someone talk about the importance of travel but also to think about ways to connect with the broader world for those without the capacity to actually travel. It was suggested that the group wait until it formally selected leadership for the committee – and possibly aim for the April meeting. Other ideas included helping to support and promote the play "Opportunity Knocks", exploring sponsorship of a bus trip to the DC African American history museum in Washington D.C., and small reading groups. It was pointed out that part of the challenge will be to narrow down the Committee's focus.

### **Updates**

Renae informed the committee about an event planned for April organized by the Pan-African Forum involving a visit from four Queen Mothers of Ghana. The visit will include a series of events, including a reception at the Museum of Fine Arts and a discussion on governance and leadership with Margaret Burnham. Brian reminded the committee that the Peace Commission will be having Cliff Cook present at their meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2016.