

## **City of Cambridge Citizen's Committee on Civic Unity Meeting**

Tuesday, July 5, 2016, 5:30 PM Cambridge Citywide Senior Center

### **Summarized meeting notes**

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

Chanta Bhan, Melissa Castillo (vice-chair), Susie Flug (chair), Renae Gray, Steven Lee, Kenny Likis

#### **Staff present:** Brian Corr

#### **General Updates Relevant to Civic Unity**

The meeting was opened by the vice chair with an acknowledgment that a number of people were unable to attend due to summer schedules, but that at the last meeting the consensus was to have the meeting in July. This may be revisited for next summer.

Committee members shared items that had come up and speak to the idea of civic unity. Items shared included: "For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'all Too" by Christopher Emlen and "Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement among African American Students" by Perry, Steele, and Hilliard; and Jesse William's acceptance speech at the BET Awards; the incident in Ohio where a man from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was profiled and through a chain of miscommunications was confronted by police with their weapons drawn; gratification for the turnout at the Cambridge Rally for Orlando; seeing a film about Nina Simone; leading a training for the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program MSYEP on racial awareness; the murder of Anthony Clay in the Port; cookout in Rose-Greene Park (Izzy's Park) on July 4th with four water slides; the Port Café community meal and gathering each month; City Dance Party; an inspiring picture of the Statue of Liberty that emphasized that immigrants have long been welcomed into our country.

The chair acknowledged how great it was for the Committee to have held a very successful event (Cambridge: Who We Are and How We Got Here) and that the group is moving forward on planning for future work on issues and events.

#### **Updates on Upcoming Events/Projects**

There was a brief discussion on GoodReads and the Committee was reminded to sign up for it so that they can start using it to discuss books; perhaps including the books mentioned in the warm-up exercise.

#### **Selection of Working Groups and Initial Brainstorming**

##### Reminders about Committee mission and goals

Susie described the background work that went into creating committee priorities, and reviewed the process that led to the voting that took place in May 2016. She then reviewed the mission statement, additional goals, and proposed strategies that the committee adopted as a framework for how to think about the discussions in the working groups. The committee discussed the complexity involved in discerning other groups or organizations related efforts and where Citizen's Civic Unity Committee can bring an important perspective or lens to those efforts and or discussions in Cambridge.

##### Working group's leadership and next steps

- 1) Events and resources for/to connect old and new Cantabrigians: Susie (convener), Danielle, Josie
- 2) An event/events on "How do I 'combat' racism": Danielle (convener), Kenny, Chanta, Melissa, Renae
- 3) An event/events on topics related to housing: Eva (convener), Melissa, Kenny

4) Responding to and tracking incidents that foster or go against civic unity: Steven (convener), Chanta, Josie, Susie

5) Online space/community for sharing resources and connecting Kenny (convener), Eva

Susie and Melissa will remind the working groups to try to meet during the summer, in anticipation of workgroups reporting back to the full committee in the fall. Each working group should have identified an objective by the November meeting, if not before, for feedback and input. The committee discussed the possibility of working groups meeting for about 30 minutes of the 90-minute monthly meetings, and then sharing what was discussed with the larger group.

### **Next Steps and Closing**

Susie reminded the committee that she is starting a certificate program in late September that meets on Tuesday nights, and asked if the group is open to changing the meeting time to the second, third, or fourth Thursday of the month.

It was announced that Haymarket is hosting the People's Institute for Survivals and Beyond is doing a three-day anti-racism institute in September, with a number of seats open for community members.

A White Privilege Conference may be hosted in Boston in the fall sponsored by Community Change Inc.

The City of Cambridge is engaged in the third Participatory Budgeting cycle, and committee members were encouraged to think about items that could be useful in their communities.