

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AD HOC RACIAL JUSTICE & COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Friday, December 18, 2020

3:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Dr. Dottie Morris, Co-Chair
Richard VanWickler, Co-Chair
Tia Hockett
Pierre Morton
Aditi Saleh
Eli Rivera
Catherine Workman, Councilor

Staff Present:

Rebecca Landry, IT Director/ACM
Shane Maxfield, Police Lieutenant
Marti Fiske, Library Director

Members Not Present:

Gail Somers

Co-Chair Morris read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency. She called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM. Roll call was conducted.

1) Minutes of Last Meeting and Public Forums

Co-chair VanWickler made a motion to approve the minutes of November 5, 2020 and from the public forums on November 17 and December 2, 2020. Eli Rivera seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

2) Committee Member Feedback For Each Public Forum

Co-Chair Morris asked to hear from Library Director Marti Fiske.

Ms. Fiske stated that she is glad to be here today. She continued that she understands that the Library came up as a topic of discussion at the last meeting. She and Julia Atkins had a good conversation. She would like to hear about the AJRJCS Committee members' experiences at the Library and to from anyone else who may have been attending and has feedback for her. Also, if appropriate, she would like to share a tool that may be of use to help people find items in the Library's collection, which feature diverse authors and characters.

Co-Chair Morris stated she remembers that the question that came up [from a member of the public] was that sometimes items were hard to find at the Keene Public Library (KPL), even if they were available at the Keene State College (KSC) library or elsewhere. She continued that there was a desire to have a broader selection of resources at the KPL.

Ms. Fiske asked for committee members' experiences with the Library. Ms. Hockett stated that her experiences have been similar to Ms. Atkins' and sometimes the items she is seeking are not available, particularly items from African-American writers, and items regarding mental health. Yes, it is possible to request books for the Library to order, but she is more likely to just order the books for herself. It would be nice to have a more diverse collection at the KPL. Ms. Fiske asked if Ms. Hockett sought assistance from staff. Ms. Hockett replied no, but she looked the information up online and then ordered the books herself.

Co-Chair Morris asked if anyone from the public had feedback about the Library. Hearing none, she welcomed more comments from the committee. Hearing none, she stated that she does not remember hearing any other concerns, or any major concerns about the Library.

Mr. Rivera asked how often the Library keeps up with the new books being released that are high demand, and how that works. Does the Library get those types of books right away, or do they wait until people request them?

Ms. Fiske replied that it is a combination of methods. She continued that they look to a variety of sources for best-sellers and high-demand titles and they regularly look at review media – there are four or five review magazines that they get information from about upcoming releases. There are a variety of authors the KPL will always receive the new books from. When they find a book with particularly high demand, something they have four or more holds for, they automatically purchase extra copies. She gave examples of books that became very popular over the summer due to the Black Lives Matter movement. She continued that whenever the Library receives requests for certain titles they do an interlibrary loan request if it is an older book and highly available, or purchase it for the KPL collection. Sometimes people move to Keene from out of state and find that books that were popular where they used to live are not popular here, or vice versa. She gave examples. The KPL receives feedback from people regarding the names or types of books or authors they are looking for, and the KPL staff can add such materials to their collection if they are made aware of the materials. They learn a lot through people's requests.

Co-Chair Morris stated that it sounds like Ms. Fiske is saying that it is important for people to communicate with Library staff about their needs. Ms. Fiske replied yes, absolutely – staff can almost always find something a person wants, whether they get it from KSC or borrow it elsewhere, and if staff cannot find it, they will buy it. She continued that they cannot buy every single item people request but they try to get a good chunk of them.

Mr. Morton asked if the Library has a policy or training for staff on racial justice, diversity and inclusion, gender issues, and so on and so forth. He continued that he asks because he heard of a

particular incident, which he thinks has already been handled, regarding a transgender person in the Library. He will not go into the details of what happened, but it made him wonder about the training opportunities or policies that are in place or will be put in place to mitigate any further issues like that. Ms. Fiske replied that she is not aware of the incident Mr. Morton is speaking of. She continued that she has been the Director for just over a year so if the incident happened before that time she is most likely not aware of it. The Library has been having more trainings on diversity since she has been here. She does not know what the previous director offered. There will be an in-service day in February for KPL staff and James McKim, President of the NAACP Seacoast, will give a two-hour implicit bias training, with another two-hour session in March to follow-up. She hopes for that to be the first of a series of regular trainings.

Ms. Fiske continued that she has not had an Assistant Director for over a year. That has been the person in charge of purchasing for the adult collection. She now has a staff member who has been helping her for the last ten months or so, taking that on, and she works with him closely to increase the diversity in the adult fiction collection. It is not easy to find review material that comes in the standard review media that libraries receive. Those review media feature diverse collections in January and February, but otherwise it is hard to find them mixed in with the regular news that the libraries receive. But he finds and adds anything he can, and she is seeking more methods. She found out that Ms. Atkins' mother is a trustee in a library in Virginia, and she will be in touch with her and see if there are lists that would be helpful for KPL staff. This is an example of how she and KPL staff are working on adding diverse books.

Ms. Landry stated that she continues to think about how this committee can make good, educated recommendations in the report to the City Council. She continued that she knows Ms. Fiske often communicates with other libraries and she is wondering if there is a standard or a resource that libraries use to gauge the diversity of their collections, or if there is a way to establish a standard that libraries can look at to compare their collections against. For example, if the committee wants to make a recommendation to the City Council about this, can they say that they recommend that the KPL strive to reach this library collection standard? Or would the recommendation just be for the KPL to look at its collection and generate a report to the City Council?

Ms. Fiske replied that mostly the standards that are held for public libraries are more about non-fiction and classic literature. She continued that individual libraries are very much a reflection of the communities that they are in and what their communities' interests are. For example, some libraries have huge collections of mysteries. Libraries in areas with large numbers of new Americans will have large collections in the languages their newly-American residents speak. She knows of a Vermont library with a huge collection of Vermont authors and self-published materials not found in other libraries. Every library is unique. Recommendations from groups such as this committee, and individuals, will have the most impact for the KPL's collection.

Co-Chair VanWickler stated that as a matter of record, in the committee's final report, it would be great if they could recommend 10 or 12 books for the Library, to make sure that this gets going. Ms. Fiske replied that she would be very happy to receive any recommendations. Co-Chair Morris

stated that the committee could make those recommendations in consultation with other people within the community.

Ms. Fiske stated that a resource she wants to share with the committee is NoveList, which allows you to search by the national identity, gender identity, and general characteristics of authors so that you can find what is currently in the KPL's collection. She continued that it also has a feature called "Read Alike," to help you find books or authors similar to books or authors you already know and like. Co-Chair Morris asked Ms. Fiske to send that resource to Ms. Landry. Ms. Fiske replied yes, and offered to show it here for a few minutes. The committee agreed. Ms. Fiske showed how to find NoveList on the KPL's website, and showed how it works with its various search functions and filters, and how it links up with the KPL's catalog. She showed how the search results can be saved, printed, or shared with others. She stated that not everything is in NoveList is in the KPL's collection, but a large number of them are. For example, she found that for the top two screens in a recent search, which had 15 items, the KPL had all but three. She gave information about the various formats of books the KPL has as well. She continued that she hopes this will be useful to people. If someone is unable to find the specific title they are looking for, they might find something of interest in "Read Alike," and if not, the KPL staff is happy to take their requests and recommendations for additions to the collection.

Co-Chair Morris stated that she is sure Ms. Atkins mentioned to Ms. Fiske that she is willing to start by giving some seed money for everyone else to contribute to, and those who do not have money to give could give their time. For example, people could facilitate a book group or those types of things.

Ms. Fiske stated that starting Monday, the KPL's materials will not be available for browsing; they are moving to curbside pick-up due to the local increase in COVID-19 cases. Staff is encouraging people to take advantage of the ways to search the KPL's collection online, and NoveList is an example of how to do that.

Co-Chair Morris thanked Ms. Fiske and stated that the committee might be in touch with her again, if they have further questions as they are writing their report for the City Council or to get Ms. Fiske's feedback on what they have written so they can make it as robust as possible.

Co-Chair Morris asked if anyone has reflections on the public forums.

Co-Chair VanWickler stated that his first impression was: he was surprised that they did not hear more from the public on issues that were going on in the community. He continued that it is not so much that he expects it is going on, but more that when he chaired the forums he found himself pressing people and asking "So do we have a problem here, or do we not?" [People said] everybody was nice – the Police are nice, the community is nice, everything is nice. He believes that there are people in the community who do have issues, but the committee did not hear a lot about the bad and the ugly. They heard a lot of good, and a few minor issues early on, but nothing in the public forums. That generated his question about the marketing of the public forums and

how they are getting to the right people, and whether they are being heard. He anticipated a lot more call-ins with people sharing experiences, and that did not happen. He asked what others think about that.

Co-Chair Morris stated that a multitude of things came up during the very first forum with the Mayor. She continued that she does not know if a lot of people felt like that was being heard, or not. They can definitely think of another way to get to people, because sometimes a public forum is not the best method. It may be important for them to meet people where they are and do more outreach. Those are her two thoughts – either people felt that they were able to say what they needed to say with the Mayor, or, the committee needs to reach out to where people are, as opposed to asking people to come to the committee.

Ms. Landry stated that regarding Co-Chair VanWickler's question of how people were notified about the forums and how they were marketed, staff put the forums out on the City's social media pages, although Facebook has changed their algorithm for governmental social media and that resulted in the City's posts receiving far less attention than they used to. The information was shared to other social media sites, and the information was put on the City's calendar and bulletin boards. She believes Co-Chair Morris mentioned the forums on the radio during the conversation with Dan Mitchell. There was also word-of-mouth from past attendees.

Co-Chair VanWickler replied that he has no doubt that the City staff did everything they could, and he helped set up the radio interview, but that is not so much the issue. He continued that his concern is that there are people in the community who know this committee is here and have something to say but did not call in and did not say it. What might that psychological barrier be? He has been thinking about it. For people to call in and talk about personal issues they have to feel safe doing that. He continued that with all due respect, he is not clear on Lt. Maxfield's role here. He is not a committee member but not a staff member, and early on the committee was told he would "be here and be available to answer any questions." If someone in the community is watching this public forum and has an issue with the police, they will not be calling this forum to report it and will not feel safe. He understands that from his work on other committees. This is not against the KPD and not against Lt. Maxfield. He thinks about the people who might see a glimmer of hope in this committee who will not call in because they do not feel safe.

Co-Chair Morris stated that if the committee does not have the data that they feel like they need, she suggests they go and meet people where they are. She continued that she suggests they find a way to do that. Regarding how to get more youth voices, she was going to ask the group, how do they do that? It sounds like Co-Chair VanWickler is raising the same issue; the question is how to get more voices.

Co-Chair VanWickler stated that he does not want the committee to try and create a solution to a problem they do not have. They might go look for people who do not exist. This was his pressing question to the guest speakers: "Do we have a problem?" Because their testimony reflected some rough spots, but there are rough spots in everything. This committee is here to explain to the

Mayor and the City Council that a problem exists in the community and what the committee thinks they can do about it. He is not seeing it or hearing it and he is challenged by going beyond his comfort zone and boundaries, right now, by speaking his truth and saying how he feels. Is the committee doing everything they can? If it means going out to find the people in the community who exist, he is okay with that, if the problem is there. But how far should the committee search for someone, who might not be having an issue to the degree that requires action by the City Council?

Co-Chair Morris stated that she is kind of confused by what Co-Chair VanWickler is saying. She continued that what she is saying is that if the committee does not feel that they have the data, usually what they would do is go to people and ask the questions, as opposed to sitting here and having them come to the committee as the committee asks the questions. If they do not have the data, they should find ways to get it. For example, she does not know how young people feel, to the extent that she would like to know how they feel about what is going on. She would like to hear some young people speak. If what young people say is "I don't know what you're talking about," then they would have data to say young people do not know what the committee is talking about and there is no problem. But if they never go ask young people, and young people do not feel comfortable coming here, the committee does not know. The same may be true of other groups of people. She knows that if she were an undocumented person, she would not come to this forum. There are undocumented people living in Keene. There are networks where the committee could talk with undocumented people that will not require a public forum like this and that is why she is suggesting they find other modalities to go to where people are. They might find that there is no problem or they might find out that there is. She is approaching this like any other research, going in with the null hypothesis that nothing exists, and until she gets the data, she has not made up her mind.

Co-Chair VanWickler stated that Co-Chair Morris hit the nail on the head and also addressed another one of his concerns, which is, what does the committee's report say? What recommendations are they making to the Mayor and the City Council? He thanked Co-Chair Morris and the committee for hearing him out.

Ms. Landry stated that she has two observations, the first being, she agrees that there are people who have not come forward. She continued that one of the reasons she is happy to be part of this committee is because she has friends she knows have been treated differently based on the color of their skin. She knows they have not come forward in this process. She still has confidence that this process will make some change happen that will give opportunities for them to be heard. The second observation is that this committee does not necessarily need to identify every problem that exists but can recommend to the City Council that they find or provide ways for people who feel like they need to be heard can be heard. Whether those are sounding boards or community representative groups, or something else, that is one way they can make a difference and address this.

Mr. Morton stated that first of all, to address Co-Chair VanWickler's question of "Do we have a problem?" the answer is yes, absolutely, as attested to by the massive bucket list that was created from information that the committee received at the very first meeting. He continued that they know that a problem exists. Oftentimes human beings will make use of an opportunity to have their voice heard, feel like it has been heard, and then pull back and let the City Council (or whoever is doing it) do their job. Thus, maybe some folks are not as engaged or did not attend other meetings of this committee, and that is just human nature. But yes, they do have a problem – that question of Co-Chair VanWickler's is solved.

Mr. Morton continued that he wants to buttress what Ms. Landry said. Now is the time the committee can begin to make some recommendations, like she said. The committee discussed having a hotline; he does not remember who brought up that idea. They discussed having one of the universities or an outside consultant produce a survey that people in the community can fill out anonymously on a yearly basis. That is what universities call a "climate survey." That can be ongoing as well. The committee *has* discussed ways to reach people who may not want to appear on camera. Once the COVID-19 vaccine makes it safe to do so, he is all for going door to door and meeting his neighbors and doing surveys that way. They need to employ and recommend all of these methods to be sustainable over time, year over year, to continue to gather data and information. They are not going to do this in six months.

Mr. Morton continued that lastly, he too, was a little nervous about/had to get to know Lt. Maxfield when he first joined this committee. After listening to Lt. Maxfield he got more comfortable. But he knows for a fact that there are people of color, people from Jamaica – whom there are a lot of in this community – who are not comfortable speaking in the presence of Lt. Maxfield or Sheriff Rivera. Taking that into account, he thinks they should recommend and further discuss other methods that the committee can use to get information, sustainably.

Ms. Hockett stated that she agrees with everything Mr. Morton, Ms. Landry, and Co-Chair VanWickler said. She continued that for her, it is hard to even be here with the committee through Zoom – it is hard to speak up, looking at everyone's faces in tiny boxes. It is frustrating and she is not very comfortable with it. Also, this is all very new to the community. She wants to be next to everyone on the committee and feel their energies and then feel comfortable to speak up. It probably is intimidating to members of the public calling in and wanting to share their personal experiences. Her family moved here in the 1940s, and she was born and raised in Keene, and can say yes, there is a problem. A lot of it comes down to education. Especially this year, which has been an eye-opening experience for a lot of people close to her. She has lost some friends and family. But this committee is a great group and she hopes when COVID-19 is over they can get out into the community. She would love to go into the schools and talk with kids. COVID-19 is putting a big wrench in everything.

Co-Chair Morris stated that she is texting with a high school student right now who has invited her to a meeting with the high school principal next week to talk about some of the very things the committee is talking about. There are ways that the committee can engage with different

communities, based on their outreach. She did outreach to this high school student as someone she knows has had problems in school, in Keene, from a very young age right through high school. She wanted to hear more from her. They can all think of ways to reach out to people to hear more perspectives.

Mr. Morton stated that many Franklin Pierce students spend time in Keene and are part of the Justice in Action Athletic Alliance. He thinks there is an opportunity for the committee to hear voices of youth that frequent the community. He is willing to set that up for the City Council over Zoom, so they can continue to gather data if that is what they need to do. Over 40% of the Franklin Pierce student body is a part of that organization.

Ms. Landry stated that she thinks Mr. Morton's idea is great. She continued that she wants it to be on record that she seconds Mr. Morton's ideas about making this sustainable and remembering that this is just step one. Issuing the report to the City Council is this committee's opportunity to say 'there is a problem, let's call it what it is' – which members of the public have said multiple times throughout this process, and then make some recommendations to get them started. Also, to find ways to make sure they can measure, on a year to year basis, how things are going and what the problems are. Just because the committee is about to issue a report in a month or two does not mean that is the end. This is just the beginning. She seconds Mr. Morton's ideas for sustainability and bringing in the Justice in Action group, whether now or after the report. It is awesome that 40% of the Franklin Pierce body is a part of that and it would be great to get their input.

Mr. Rivera stated that he understands where Co-Chair VanWickler and Mr. Morton are coming from, regarding how people might be intimidated or hesitant to come forward if they know that people from law enforcement are sitting at the table. He continued that he wants to be part of the conversation because he thinks it is important to be a part of it, but at the same time, if the committee believes that his attendance might be causing folks to be reluctant to come forward, he would take a hiatus from this committee. His position has been that it is important for him to be part of the conversation because he needs to hear what the community is saying and how he can better perform and be better at his job, firsthand. This is a difficult decision, but he will step aside if it makes people more comfortable speaking to the committee.

Co-Chair VanWickler stated that he does not want anyone to misinterpret what he was saying. He continued that he is not saying there is no problem. He is saying he thought the committee would hear more than what they did, and when they did hear from people that there are problems, it was not specific enough. Mr. Rivera is a committee member appointed by the Mayor. His point earlier was that if the committee has a sitting Police Officer who is not on the committee or not considered a staff member, he wants to know what that person's role is. It is different if you are appointed by the Mayor as a committee member. He is curious about the KPD's role. No one is asking Mr. Rivera to take a hiatus; Mr. Rivera is an important part of the community and he has been appointed by the Mayor to be on this committee. What is the role of the KPD outside of the meeting when they talked about the KPD, to have an active, full, and silent presence at every meeting?

Co-Chair Morris asked if Co-Chair VanWickler is asking Lt. Maxfield that question. Co-Chair VanWickler replied that he is just putting it out there as Co-Chair. What is the role of the KPD, having a seat on the committee when they are not a committee member or considered a staff member? If Lt. Maxfield wants to respond, that would be great – he could explain why he has been at all of these meetings. He is welcome to do that, but he is also a representative of the KPD and everyone knows that can be a barrier to communication.

Co-Chair Morris asked Lt. Maxfield to respond if he has a response. Lt. Maxfield stated that he is considered a City staff person for the purposes of this ad hoc committee. He continued that it was purported originally, in the very beginning, that law enforcement issues were probably first and foremost of people's concerns. That is why people above him thought it would be a good idea for one of the City staff positions to be someone from the KPD and they asked if he was available to answer questions. He is here and mostly stays silent unless someone asks him a question.

Co-Chair VanWickler thanked Lt. Maxfield for the clarification. He continued that Mr. Rivera was a Commander with the KPD and is the elected Sheriff. He (Co-Chair VanWickler) probably missed hearing that a member of the KPD was going to be at the committee's meetings throughout to answer any potential questions. Again, he is not knocking the KPD or Lt. Maxfield; he is just trying to understand why the committee did not get more information that he expected they would get and was surprised they did not get in these three public forums.

Ms. Landry stated that the Mayor has attended almost all of the committee's meetings, but is not here today. She continued that she cannot speak for the Mayor directly, but she suspects that if he were here he might say that he felt it very important to have a member of the KPD in this group and that obviously the KPD was going to be looked into very closely. She thinks Mr. Morton's involvement there was very valuable. Mr. Morton did so much research, and his perception of the KPD and how it handles things really evolved. That is why the KPD has a representative that is staffing this committee. She understands and respects Mr. Rivera's offer to take a step back; however, Mr. Rivera was asked to be on this committee, as was Lt. Maxfield, because he/they have very valuable input and there are ways after or outside of this committee that the committee can get input and deal with the reality that people may feel intimidated either providing input to this committee or providing input when there are law enforcement officers present.

Co-Chair Morris stated that it sounds like this bears a conversation with the Mayor at some point or another, to ask about some of these things, because if the committee is not clear as to why people are here, they need to ask the person who asked them to be here. Maybe they should set up a time to meet with the Mayor and explain some of the concerns that Co-Chair VanWickler has expressed, and how the process has not played out in the way that they expected or would have liked it to. Would that help the issue?

Councilor Workman stated that she shares Co-Chair VanWickler's sentiments – she was a little disappointed that they did not have as much public input as she would have liked to hear, or as

much as they had at the original forum held over the summer. She continued that however, she did keep in mind what people said at that original forum before the committee was really formed. She thinks they will hear more once they have a report. Then people will look at the report and say, for instance, “I don’t like that recommendation; I don’t want that one; this one’s not going to work,” and so on and so forth. She has a couple ideas. She was wondering if the Lt. Maxfield or Mr. Rivera can speak to this – when she was growing up in Boston the Police Athletic League was a really good relationship-builder with the community. It served mostly adolescent males but was open to girls, too. It was a partnership and mentorship between police officers and adolescents. She was not sure if Keene had anything like that, or if Keene would consider it. She also thought of a pen pal type of program. She senses that there is not a lot of exposure to different cultures, for a lot of folks in Keene. Even though Keene’s population has grown more diverse over the past two decades or so, there is not a lot of direct contact. During a pandemic would be a perfect time to do some sort of pen pal program.

Ms. Landry stated that she loves the Police Athletic League idea, and she knows the KPD has done that through the years and it has been wildly successful, and her children were in the Parks & Rec sports programs. The KPD was very participatory. One of the former Chiefs was her son’s basketball coach, which was great. She does not know to what extent the KPD is doing this now. But she agrees that it is a great idea.

Lt. Maxfield stated that the KPD does not have anything exactly like that right now. He continued that unfortunately, those sorts of accessory programs suffer from fluctuating attendance, both on the police side and the kids’ side.

3) Discussion: How Best to Get Youth Input (elementary, middle school, high school)

[This agenda item was addressed as part of the previous agenda item]

4) Discussion: Next Phase – Examination of Information and Drafting of Report

Co-Chair Morris stated that she has heard that the committee needs to find ways to get more data, and they will be thinking of ways to do that. She continued that Mr. Morton mentioned convening a group of people and the idea of getting someone to create and send out a survey. When she is done talking with the high school principal, maybe they can get a group of students together and a committee could help facilitate that discussion with high school and middle school students, to get more of those voices heard. That is another way to get more data. She continued that second, it seems like the committee needs to maybe talk to the Mayor about the process that the committee has tried to engage in and some of the pieces they did not think about that potentially prevented them from getting the information they needed. That is, raising the issue of having law enforcement be a part of this. They could have a direct conversation about it with the Mayor to let him know that that came up as a concern, and get guidance on how to work through that, if they continue to have the structure they currently have. They could use some clarification. It may mean a shift, or not. But it would be good to have that conversation.

Ms. Landry stated that she has a question for the committee. A really good survey requires some financial investment and some commitment. Does the committee want to make a recommendation to the City Council that they engage a thorough survey process going forward, or would the committee prefer to do a thorough survey before they make any report to the City Council?

Mr. Morton replied that he thinks it should be a recommendation, because like Ms. Landry said, to do a really good survey – even if they took advantage of the wonderful universities in the area – takes time. Even if they started talking about and creating the survey in January, it would not even be near done until summer. That is a bit late. He thinks the committee should make their recommendations first, and that would be one of them.

Councilor Workman stated that she shares Mr. Morton's sentiments. She continued that having a survey and that data would be helpful, but since it is December, she would hate to wait for the recommendation of the report to come out with that data. It is critical to have, though. As a Councilor, she would support spending the money for that survey and data.

Mr. Morton stated that this is an ad hoc committee and will end. He continued that he thinks there is a need for them to recommend that the City Council extend this committee a while longer. Ms. Landry replied that ad hoc committees need to be renewed on an annual basis, probably at the beginning of the calendar year. She will talk with the Mayor about how to go about doing that, because they need more time to create the report.

Co-Chair Morris stated that they could cite that they did not get the data and they have some ideas of what might have impeded the process of getting the data, and that they need to go back out and get more. Ms. Landry stated that they also have the opportunity to go and provide a verbal update to the City Council about what they have done so far and what they still need to do. That potentially provides an opportunity for the public to weigh in before they issue a report.

Mr. Rivera stated that he likes the idea of a survey. He continued that a quick internet search showed him there are a lot of communities out there doing surveys on racial issues and inclusion. This would be a good opportunity for the committee to better understand the community.

Co-Chair Morris stated that it sounds like they are thinking about how to develop the writing of the report, because what goes into that report will depend on what data and how much data they get. Or, it may be that they give an update, and then the recommendation, as Mr. Morton said, is that the committee needs to be extended because they did not get all the data. Is that what people are feeling? A preliminary report based on what they currently have and a recommendation to get more data so they can create a more comprehensive report?

Co-Chair VanWickler stated that when he asked that this item be put on the agenda, they achieved exactly what he was hoping to achieve, and that was to capture some reflections in the meeting

minutes that they can extrapolate into their report, and they actually got a bonus – they have stimulated some other ideas and thought processes. That is great. Co-Chair Morris agreed.

Ms. Landry stated that she has been keeping pretty detailed notes, and what she would like to do next, if the committee is okay with it, is provide to the committee in outline format – not with a lot of verbiage yet – the recommendations that have been made by members of the committee so that they can look at what would be included in the report. She continued that she is 100% okay with constructive criticism, so people should feel free to say “No, we didn’t want to put that in there” or “You missed the boat on that one.” This would just give them a starting point for making progress toward the report. Committee members agreed.

Co-Chair Morris asked if anyone else had more comments before they move on to the next agenda item.

Mr. Morton stated that he is very proud, and wants to lift up Lt. Maxfield and Co-Chair VanWickler, because this is what they are here to do: have honest, open, robust, sometimes a bit passionate conversations as they try to be the voice of the community. He continued that he knows it took courage for Co-Chair VanWickler to speak his truth and it took just as much courage for Lt. Maxfield to listen and respond. He is grateful for what he saw today.

5) Next Meeting – Agenda Items and Schedule

Co-Chair Morris stated that the next meeting’s agenda will include a discussion of whatever document Ms. Landry provides, and that will be the committee’s start to writing something to submit to the City Council, whether it is a progress report or a preliminary report. She continued that if they continue with Mr. Morton’s observation, they could think about inviting the Mayor to the meeting to have that open discussion with him about some of the concerns that were shared today about why people may not have felt safe enough to provide more information during the public forums and what that means for the work moving forward. They could ask Ms. Landry to make sure the Mayor is here, if the committee wants to do that.

Mr. Morton stated that it would help to come up with the date for when the committee will present to the City Council (either verbally or in writing) and work backwards from that date, because if that date is the end of January, they need to focus on getting that done, working with things how they stand now, without focusing on any changes that may or may not be made as an outcome of their conversation with the Mayor. Then moving forward, depending on the outcome of the conversation with the Mayor, they can do that. But they need to know the goal date for having this done.

Co-Chair Morris replied that she is not feeling the end of January. She continued that she does not know what the date is and thinks that is part of the conversation about the report that they did not get to, because they realized how much more that they need to do.

Ms. Landry suggested three months. That would give them two or three meetings after seeing the outline. Co-Chair VanWickler stated that he personally cannot see the end zone yet. He cannot imagine wrapping this up by the end of January, and thinks they ought to anecdotally plan for at least three more meetings and see how it goes. As things develop he thinks they will feel better about the verbal presentation and final report. But he is not seeing it or feeling it right now. They have a big box of detailed information that they have to sort through and organize. Having that in bulleted format gets them started.

Co-Chair Morris stated that she agrees with that way of thinking. She asked others for their thoughts.

Councilor Workman stated that she agrees with an extension of three months.

Ms. Hockett stated that she agrees, too, and thinks today's meeting was great. It brought up a lot more. Everyone had been trying to be "polite," and this is the first time doing this - bringing up more that they really needed to discuss with each other and work through.

Ms. Saleh stated that she agrees that they can keep working and discussing. She continued that things have been going well so far.

Co-Chair Morris stated that it sounds like they are all in agreement with this plan. She asked when they can meet next. Brief discussion ensued. The committee decided on January 28, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

Mr. Morton asked if there is a way that when these meetings are advertised in the usual ways, they can also be announced on Facebook, and if it is possible to let people know via Facebook that they can submit anonymous inquiries or comments to the committee so the committee has that public input when they next meet. Ms. Landry replied that she will try and think of a way to make it anonymous. Mr. Morton replied that there is no rush; this is something they can think about next time. Ms. Landry replied that she is happy to keep people's confidence, but the challenge is that they are subject to Right to Know laws and everything that is emailed (to the City) goes into an archive and is discoverable. She is not opposed to keeping things confidential, but there is a risk there.

There being no further business, Co-Chair Morris adjourned the meeting at 4:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Rebecca Landry, IT Director/ACM