**Weston DEI Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Notes for June 5, 2023**

In attendance:

* Vanessa Richards
* Melissa Conner
* Wendy Ramos
* Amy Jenner
* Ian Parsells, Director, Weston Library –

**Topics covered:**

Juneteenth Event at the Library

Pride Events at the Library

**First Pride Flag raise in Town today:** Vanessa shared that the first ceremony and raising of the Pride Flag took place at Town Hall today.

**Improved Communication across Town Committees for DEI activities:**Amy suggested that the DEI Advisory committee should be notified by other town committees to ensure we are part of, or in attendance at these events. We all need to work to ensure we’re all more communicative across all of our committees.

**Location: For Juneteenth and Pride Events**, it was agreed that these events should be held through the library to ensure the broadest distribution of information to Weston residents. This is a great way to get people engaged.

**Juneteenth Weston Library Summer Adult Reading Series**

* Scheduled for Thursday, June 22nd @ 7pm

**Juneteenth Library Event for Children**- We could potentially do a Kids Speak up and kids can ask questions on diversity and Juneteenth, and what it means to the town-to-town selectmen.

* Scheduled for Saturday, June 17th during day, Time TBA, considering food trucks.

The committee opened the meeting with Vanessa introducing Ian Parsells, the Director of the Weston Library who gave an update on what events the library has planned around Juneteenth as well as Pride Month.

 Ian reached out to the library community and got a few suggestions for a speaker or Author for Juneteenth. Challenged by short turn around, there are a couple of options, two are virtual and one based in Boston could potentially speak at the event, waiting to hear if 22nd works for them. A few weeks away, we prefer in-person, which makes it a bit of a challenge. Virtual a bit easier, but limits what we do for a discussion purpose. Ian asked for other suggestions as well.

Ian gave the following individuals: Some asked him if it was a paid opportunity, which Ian said it was.

* In-Person option: NELA, they do DEI series, one of which is Dialogues on Diversity. The Director, Ron Jones would travel to provide the program. He’s going to check if the 22nd works for him or someone locally in his network that could help us.
* VIRTUAL- Martha Verkeem Harris
* Virtual – Dr. Kameesha Scrubs
* Both virtual speakers come highly recommended

Wendy mentioned that there is a diverse bookstore called Kindred Thoughts, Bridgeport that might have access to local authors and speakers.

Melissa said we should do a soft hold on one of the virtual speakers to just ensure we can provide a speaker, even if virtual. She would reach out to the marketing committee to see if they can help advertise. Ian said he could reach out to the virtual speakers.

Vanessa would like the speakers to be educational in nature. Melissa thinks the speaker should be more focused about the commemoration of the Holiday about inclusion and community.

Amy said she might have a local person that could be a speaker. She will let us know tomorrow.

**Juneteenth Action Items:**
Ian- Follow up with Avon about the virtual speaker’s availability.

Amy- will follow up with her contact and let us know tomorrow.

We will discuss by email whether or not we have a speaker connected.

Melissa will reach out to the Marketing Committee for both the Pride and Juneteenth events.

**For the Library Series Pride Event:**

Ian has a contact that he had been considering for the summer. He thought it might be a suitable time to put something together. There is someone that is part of the library consortium that provided the recommendation to hire Clare McCarthy, Owner of Transqat, who is an educator, LGBTQ advocate, and speaker of trans gender rights and history. Ian suggested having a shared understanding of Transgender Introduction to the concept. This could provide a good context; it could be a good start on the journey of understanding a specific language. This is about finding understanding and empathy, this could be valuable. She provides a board that felt balls that can stick to it and choose a subject, which she will address. She gives a basis understanding of pronouns, transitions, scary stats, tolerance, this allows a level of opportunity to discuss a topic. An interesting interactive engagement to present the topic.

Melissa, Wendy, and Amy think it would be a great candidate.

Wendy asked if Ian had seen her presentation. Ian said no, but there are examples on her website. Ian said he will send us her website tonight, which we will review, and then respond by email to Vanessa & Ian by tomorrow afternoon if we approve moving forward with finalizing the speaker booking of Clare.

**Proposed Pride Event Date: Location Timing**

Clare McCarthy June 27th Library 6:30pm -8:30pm

Melissa asked if Ian needed our help to speak to the Town Marketing Committee about the Pride and Juneteenth Events, which he indicated he would welcome larger exposure. He’s fine to manage the library marketing.

Vanessa asks if Ian could also include the information on the Library Pride youth event so we can share all Pride and Juneteenth events with the Town Marketing Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm