



Together Effectively Achieving Multiculturalism

TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2011, 7:30 AM
Room 201
Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT

Attendees: Judy Hamer, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Jocelyn Schur, Nick Rudd, Patricia Wei, Bernicestine McLeod, Harold Bailey (Presiding), Barbara Butler, Steve Daniels, Glenn Lau-Kee (by phone), Stu Losen, Dolores Paoli, and Stephane Kirven

Visitors: Susan Ellis, Jen Liu

Guest: Gail Kelly, Assistant Town Attorney, who joined us at 7:55AM

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 AM.

We each introduced ourselves for the benefit of new attendees.

What's Up?

- Catherine is going to be publishing her memoirs.
- We commented on some of misstatements made by the candidates in Iowa, especially with regard to poor people.
- We mentioned the young African-American male student in South Carolina who says that the Confederate flag represents him because it represents the South. Where is the sense of history? Textbooks don't cover issues adequately.

New Business:

a. **Staples Diversity Classes – topic=Japan:**

Patricia, Maggie, and Harold have been working with Staples High School on a celebration of Japanese culture. The fact that we are involved in programming was welcomed by TEAM members (particularly since this is programming related to history given the context of the Japanese internment in America). Recommendations were made as to who should be contacted from the community and at Staples for participation.

b. **Retail Diversity in Westport:**

Harold told the committee about a recent situation occurring in Westport that had been brought to his attention. The situation involved a former employee of a business in town who felt that they had a strong case demonstrating discriminatory practices. Gail Kelly graciously attended today's meeting to walk through the town's policies and practices with us regarding handling this type of situation.



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Questions:

1. What is the current procedure in Town?
 - a) We (TEAM Westport) have a procedure in place to discuss incidents with the Police Department as a result of previous situations that have occurred in Town.
 - b) We do not, however, get involved with affirmative action legal actions. We can give information, e.g., for someone to contact the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), but cannot advise anyone one way or the other.
 - c) Complaint calls would typically come in to the First Selectman's office. Then they would be routed to the Town Attorney's office or the Human Services office.
 - d) There is no real process from what we can determine and people don't know what to do and where to go, so incidents are not reported.
2. How do incidents like this affect the Town's reputation?

Obviously negatively. The business community can also be affected due to a negative perception of the Town.
3. What is our mission?
 - a) Since we don't want to and can't get into a legal position with regard to situations, we can do something about the underlying reasons things happen in the first place.
 - b) We can document incidents, work with the Town, and be a resource as to next steps since the Town has no official employee with a title that would indicate responsibility for handling such incidents.
 - c) Our role should be educational at best.

Actions:

1. Harold will discuss next steps with Gordon Joseloff, First Selectman, with regard to this individual situation and to the Town's approach and process for handling future complaints.
2. We'll brainstorm proactively about how to enhance a positive environment in Town. Suggested was a campaign to 'Celebrate Westport' or to celebrate a 'Welcoming Westport' to show that Westport cares. The proposed result is a certificate or 'mark' indicating participating businesses.



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3.

Old Business:

a. Harold gave an update on our work with the Westport Country Playhouse:

1) *Harbor* is to be presented at the Playhouse next season about a gay couple in Long Island. We want to be sensitive to the subject matter, but want to ensure that we don't act as junior therapists.

Action: Jocelyn volunteered to help with this effort. She was involved with the Gay/Straight Alliance at Staples when she was a student and will follow up with Principal Dodig and Dan Woog.

2) Harold will be scheduling a meeting with David Kennedy, Associate Artistic Director at the Playhouse, around the middle of January to discuss our preparation for *A Raisin in the Sun* to be presented in October/November.

b. Programming Strategy and Gameplan: We'll be joined at our February meeting by the Westport Schools Curriculum team who replaced Brian Fagan.

c. Maggie Mudd and others from TEAM will be working with the PTA in early January to strategize planning around the schools.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 AM.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 3, 2012, at 7:30 AM in Room 201 of Westport Town Hall. Happy Holidays to all!

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod
Secretary