

Minutes, West Tisbury Task Force Against Discrimination Monthly Meeting, November 1, 2022

Approved at Task Force meeting, Dec. 6, 2022

Present: Alexandra Pratt, Arielle Faria, Brad Cortez, Loren Ghiglione, Omar Johnson, Susanna J. Sturgis, Ted Jochsberger, Terry Kriedman

Omar called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m. via Zoom

The **Oct. 4 minutes** were **approved**.

Report from Oct. 26 Selectboard Meeting

Susanna attended because she hadn't heard from Omar and thought someone from the Task Force (TF) should be there. None of us had been notified that we would be on the agenda. Selectboard member Skipper Manter wanted to cap TF membership at 7 because he thinks that's a good number. Susanna pointed out that no number is given in the Diversity Statement, we want to be as diverse as possible, and in the past we'd discussed 10–12 as being ideal. The selectboard settled on a cap of 10. The TF will be posted on the town website as having openings till we're at capacity. Prospective members should submit a letter of interest to town administrator Jen Rand. We're now officially the Task Force Against Discrimination.

Susanna said that the [Martha's Vineyard Times story](#) posted on Oct. 27 accurately reflected what happened at the Oct. 26 selectboard meeting.

Sad but Understandable News

Omar told us that he had submitted his resignation as chair of the TFAD effective as of this meeting to Jen Rand, who will give it to the selectboard. *[SJS note: Omar's resignation was accepted by the SB at its Nov. 16 meeting.]* He read his letter to us:

I submit this letter of resignation ending my participation as the chairperson and member of the West Tisbury Task Force Against Discrimination effective as of this meeting. I am certain that the Task Force would be better served by [inaudible] person who is more involved and committed to the responsibilities and goals of the Task Force. I kindly ask that the selectboard and the members of the Task Force respect this decision and allow me to fully focus on my primary duties as the health agent for the town of West Tisbury.

We all thanked Omar for getting the Task Force started and seeing us this far, and during two years when his responsibilities as West Tisbury health agent could not have been more demanding thanks to COVID-19.

The question was raised about how a new chair is chosen, e.g., would they be appointed by the town? Arielle and Ted said that we were in charge of choosing our own chair. We agreed to give some thought to this before our next meeting.

Prospective New Member

Omar asked Arielle, who was attending her first TFAD meeting, to introduce herself. She lives in West Tisbury with her family and in addition to being Edgartown's affordable housing manager is involved in several community organizations, including as co-chair of the Coalition to Create the M.V. Housing Bank and board member of the M.V. Hospital and the M.V. Community Foundation. She's been wanting to get more involved in West Tisbury. She has been coming to the Vineyard since she was a baby. Her background is partly West Indies, and her husband is from Brazil. She's very interested in diversity / equity / inclusion (DEI) issues in all the towns and believes it's important to have a diversity of people making decisions.

Arielle asked what our short- and longer-term goals were. Examples included Loren's survey and planning for our event in February. Loren mentioned learning more about whether and how DEI issues are considered in hiring decisions. Alexandra gave providing DEI training and workshops for town employees as a longer-term interest. Arielle noted that these should be sponsored by the personnel board because funding would be available. Terry pointed out that our role might be to raise and pursue these goals with the appropriate board. Omar gave increasing the TF's diversity as a goal, and Susanna is interested in providing referrals for townspeople who face challenges related to these issues.

[SJS note: Arielle submitted her letter of interest to Jen Rand, and both she and Ted were appointed to the Task Force at the Nov. 16 selectboard meeting.]

Update on February Event Planning

No new developments. A possible title was suggested: "West Tisbury Matters." Susanna will work on updating the handout used at the 2020 "What Makes West Tisbury Tick" forum.

Guest Appearance by Cindy Mitchell

Cindy couldn't attend this meeting but will be able to join us on Dec. 6. Loren volunteered to take over liaison duties from Omar.

Draft Press Release About Board/Committee Survey

Susanna will take care of sending the release to both papers and MVY Radio. *[SJS note: This resulted in Eunki Seonwoo's Nov. 7 M.V. Times story "[Seeking to Diversify West Tisbury Government.](#)"]*

Letter to Airport Commission on September Race-Related Incident

Susanna wasn't able to get to this but will get back to it.

Susanna will set up the next Zoom meeting for Dec. 6.

The meeting was **adjourned** at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanna J. Sturgis
Recorder, WT TFAD