

Minutes, WT Task Force Against Discrimination, August 3, 2021

APPROVED Sept. 7, 2021

Present: Omar Johnson, Terry Kriedman, Alexandra Pratt, Susanna Sturgis, Brad Cortez (came in late)

The meeting started at 5:02 in the program room of the West Tisbury library.

The July 20 minutes were approved. *[SJS note: They were sent to the town clerk for filing on Aug. 5.]*

M.V. Diversity Coalition (MVDC)

Susanna finally made contact with Sandy Pimentel, who seems to be the moving spirit behind the MVDC and is officially the acting chair of the board. They are planning a big event at the Tabernacle for the Friday and Saturday of Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3 and 4. More info about it [here](#). The Friday activities, from 5 to 9 p.m., focus on history. The Saturday activities, from 2 to 9 p.m., focus on community and celebration, with food and art in the afternoon and performances in the evening.

Sandy said that community groups could set up tables. Susanna told her we might be interested, but at least two of us are going to be off-island that weekend and the possible hours involved are long. Susanna will follow up with Sandy. *[SJS note: This event was cancelled and may be rescheduled in the spring.]*

Website

Omar suggested the possibility of a Task Force website to let people know what we're doing. Susanna thought this was a good idea but she knows from experience that keeping a website up-to-date and interesting takes time and effort. It was generally agreed that a page on the town website would be a good place to start. Omar will follow up with Tara or Janice about this.

Planning for fall event

Intended audience: There was general agreement that we want to include town residents, not just town employees.

Where: Most likely venues in terms of size, cost, and availability are the library, the school, and the charter school.

When: Ideally After the end of September but before Thanksgiving

Programming ideas

- short film
- interactive icebreaker exercise
- listening session: This would be an opportunity for townsfolk to bring up thoughts and concerns. People could have the option of writing these down.
- distribute resource list (prepared in advance) of ways to resolve problems that arise (e.g., town grievance procedures, M.V. Mediation Project)

- possible speaker and/or someone to consult with: Dr. Walter Collier, author of [*Why Racism Persists: An Uncomfortable Truth*](#). He's a Vineyard resident and the chair emeritus of the M.V. Diversity Coalition.

Questions / Challenges

- possibility of having a facilitator? (Jill De La Hunt was mentioned as someone with experience in this area)
- how to engage the Brazilian community
- how to get younger people involved
- Omar will talk to the town about money

Other business

Susanna reported that the MV NAACP has a Legal Redress committee to which people are encouraged to bring incidents (etc.) that need attention. Despite the name, committee members aren't (or don't have to be) lawyers. They investigate complaints and help people find the resources to resolve them. This is something our Task Force might do in the future.

We briefly discussed the idea of asking the selectboard to declare Oct. 11 Indigenous Peoples' Day but didn't take action on this.

The meeting was adjourned at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanna J. Sturgis
Recorder