

ETF Minutes 3-4-21 Final
EQUITY TASK FORCE – TOWN OF NATICK

MEETING MINUTES
Conducted via Zoom
March 4, 2021
6:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Sue Salamoff, Designee of the Select Board and Chair of Equity Task Force
Christine Robinson, Member at Large and Vice Chair of Equity Task Force
Karen Adelman-Foster, Designee of the Select Board, Select Board Vice Chair
Dorothy Blondiet, Natick HR Director
Nora Elbasha, Designee of the School Committee
Jamie Errickson, Designee of the Town Administrator and Deputy Town Administrator
Eric Nguyen, Member at Large
Dr. Anna Nolin, Member at Large
Dr. Marilyn Park, Member at Large

ABSENT:

Guimel DeCarvalho, Member at Large
Dr. Tina Opie, Member at Large

ALSO PRESENT:

Bob Bernstein
James Freas, Community Economic Development Director

ATTACHMENTS:

Draft minutes from 2-28-2021
2020 Equity Task Force Annual Report
ETData342021

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chair announced the names of the members present, announced that a quorum was present, and called the public meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. She noted that the meeting had been duly posted, that the meeting was being recorded by Zoom, and that all votes would be held via roll call. After brief discussion, consensus was reached that members would use first names.

MINUTES:

Anna moved and Marilyn seconded the motion to approve the minutes of 1/28/2021. The motion passed by a vote of 9-0-0.

CHAIR UPDATE:

Annual Town Report

Sue shared a draft committee report for the Annual Town Report for 2020. Eric moved and Dorothy seconded the motion to approve the draft 2020 Equity Task Force Annual Report. The motion passed by a vote of 9-0-0.

Sue:

- Natick180 has hired an equity consultant.
- There is a possibility for anyone on our committee would be invited to training sessions.
- The Natick Police Department has gotten a grant for trainings that may also be available to ETF members.
- The REMAP group is moving forward in its work.

Anna:

- An equity planning coach has been assigned to our district as part of the RIDES Program at Harvard University.
- Dr. Kalyse Wornum has begin to train all administrators and all staff on two levels of anti-bias and equity training to build common vocabulary and techniques for becoming an actively anti-racist district and a district that leads and serves with equity at its core.

UPDATE ON ETF CONSULTANT

Jamie: We can go through the procurement process any time, but we won't be able to execute the contract until the beginning of Fiscal Year 22 on July 1, 2021. The procurement process can take from four to eight weeks, the Select Board must execute the contract, etc, so it's lengthy. But we now have time to develop the scope.

Sue: It may impact the time-frame we're dealing with, but we'll need to talk to the Select Board about that.

Dorothy: What's our time-frame, including for the first report? Isn't there a report due?

Sue: Technically that annual report could be the basis of the sixty-day report.

Karen and Sue will work on a draft report to submit to the Select Board for the next ETF meeting.

UPDATE ON SUBCOMMITTEES AND POPULATION OF SUBCOMMITTEES

Christine discussed the charges of each of the three subcommittees and assignments for each. The assignments are as follows:

Municipal Subcommittee

Karen
Dorothy
Marilyn

Schools Research Subcommittee

Nora
Anna
Sue

Natick Community and Town Subcommittee

Guimel
Jamie
Eric
Tina

Christine will not sit on a subcommittee but will braid the word together.

Eric: I want to caution us against focusing solely on an approach that necessitates disparities in equity in order to make an argument for an equity entity in Natick. Certainly, identifying such disparities will make it easier to articulate the need, but we need to think more broadly about why an equity entity should exist in our town. Our population and its needs continue to change, and policies and practices that are currently equitable might not be equitable in the future. We must be proactive in ensuring that equity remains a central focus in Natick as we move forward.

Christine: This goes to the town's request of the ETF.

Karen: Nothing in the Board's charge would contradict Eric's comment.

Christine: Each subcommittee is a public entity that will need to operate under Open Meeting Law.

DISCUSSION ON TYPES OF DATA NEEDED BY EACH SUBCOMMITTEE

Eric: We often think about the necessity of an equity entity coming from disparities that currently exist.

Christine: Do we need to research disparities, or can we be proactive? This goes to the rationale for gathering the data. What do we need to know, and how does that information guide the entity?

Sue: It's obvious by the way the town is extending itself to make things happen that we need professional capacity. What is structural racism, then how do you do something about it?

Christine: We'll need to submit a report that is supported.

Marilyn: It's important to get a good solid baseline of where we are to make recommendations. Even starting with what we're doing in Natick. We're not an action task force, but an information gathering one.

Anna: There's appetite for an outside audit. We need to lay ourselves bare, even in terms of what we think we do well. If nothing else, it builds confidence in parts of our community that worry that we're too complacent. In general: We need distributed leadership, not an immediate hire that results in an equity professional being the only one who cares about this topic.

Karen: I think there are two categories of research we're doing: needs research, and possible solutions research.

Christine: Research can also be what we know from the course of our lives.

Eric: Re: Questions we want to ask across the subcommittees. One is full participation. What does participation look like. Who participates, who doesn't, why. Who is hired, who isn't, why (including public safety, schools, administration).

Christine: How much information does the Select Board need and what do we need to inform our recommendations?

Sue: We'll start seeing patterns. For example, communities that have strong non-profits have established partnerships with them. There needs to be a philosophy from the top, so top-down, but also from citizens' groups.

Christine: There's significant work on how people are made to feel welcome and as though they can co-create. How do you begin to get that sense of mattering, co-creation, and belonging? That's more than putting a sign up or having a slogan.

Sue: We need to know what exists, then what to do with what exists.

Jamie: The meetings have been double-booked so the meeting will need to end early.

Eric: We were going to generate the larger questions that all the subcommittees will consider. How we will do that if we're not to do it tonight.

Christine: This will happen in the subcommittees. Each subcommittee will generate that list. And then, that will inform the scope. Christine will connect the subcommittees. Each subcommittee will consider the questions that need to be asked to determine if Natick needs a committee, what its structure should be.

Christine: All protected classes are part of this discussion. In some places there are diversity committees for every different function -- for housing, for health.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULES, INFORMATION, AND DATA SHARING

A Google Drive has been created at

SCHEDULE ETF MEETINGS

No meeting on April 1. The next meetings will be in subcommittee.

ADJOURN:

At 7:48 p.m., Eric moved to adjourn, Karen seconded the motion, and a vote was held by roll call.

Sue Salamoff (Chair)	Y
Christine Robinson (Vice Chair)	Y
Karen Adelman-Foster	Y
Dorothy Blondiet	Y
Guimel DeCarvalho	Absent
Nora Elbasha	Y
Jamie Errickson	Y
Eric Nguyen	Y
Dr. Anna Nolin	Y
Dr. Tina Opie	Absent
Dr. Marilyn Park	Y

The motion passed by a vote of 9-0-0.

Submitted by Karen Adelman-Foster