

City of



Gary Christenson, Mayor

Racial Equity Commission

City Hall, 215 Pleasant Street, Malden

Conference Room #105

Thursday, February 22, 2024, 6pm-8pm

Members of the Commission may choose to participate in the meeting remotely and members of the public who wish to attend remotely can do so by using the following information:

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Webinar Feedback and Future Improvements

The team discussed the feedback received from a recent webinar. There were concerns about the online experience, with attendees feeling disconnected during group discussions due to muting. The team agreed that it was important to acknowledge past accomplishments and provide more context about the work moving forward. There was also a suggestion to have tech support available for future hybrid meetings. The team decided to revisit some key points that were rushed or cut due to time constraints during the meeting.

3. Tech Support, Newsletter, and Food for Upcoming Event

The team discussed the need for improved tech support for upcoming events. Kashawna shared her experience of not having adequate tech support during the last event and proposed to have a senior tech member present for the entirety of the upcoming event. Maria confirmed that she would ensure someone from the IT team would be present during the event. Elena suggested creating a newsletter or summary to engage the community and provide a platform for feedback. The team agreed on this idea and decided to include it as an action item. Additionally, the idea of having food at the event was brought up as a way to enhance the experience.

4. Focus, Presence, Professional Development, Dialogue, SWOT, Train the Trainer

The meeting discussed the length of the discussions and the layout of the commission during a recent event. The team agreed on the need to focus on one or two main topics in future meetings and to show a more cohesive presence as a commission. There was also a discussion about the need for professional development opportunities and strategic planning. The idea of using a SWOT analysis to identify areas of focus and leadership was proposed. The team also discussed the need for more honest community dialogue and the importance of policy commitments to equity, anti-racism, and full inclusion. The possibility of using a "train the trainer" model was also suggested to share insights from external events with the wider commission.

5. Personal Reflection and Future Event Planning

Kashawna proposed the idea of personal reflection within the team to gain a deeper understanding of each other's motivations and experiences. The team agreed to implement this in their next meeting, with a potential for a mini workshop. In addition, Kashawna suggested scheduling a future event by mid-May and mentioned the possibility of incorporating food into the event.

6. Inviting Community Leaders for Insights

Kashawna proposed the idea of inviting community leaders to a future meeting to gain their insights and perspectives on the ongoing work. She suggested reaching out to leaders from various organizations and potentially incorporating their input into the discussion. There was also a brief discussion about a letter received from Senator Lewis, although no further details were provided. The team agreed that the idea of inviting community leaders was a good one, with HCH noting that it could potentially increase public participation in the commission meetings. However, there were concerns about the availability of space for larger gatherings.

7. Town Hall Meeting Roles and Strategic Planning

There was a discussion about the roles of the participants in the town hall meetings and how they can contribute in the next sessions. The participants expressed concerns about repeating the same points and the need for strategic planning. The focus groups or working groups were identified to help define goals and objectives, measure progress, and create solutions. It was clarified that there won't be another SWOT meeting, instead, they aim to capture more contributions from those who couldn't attend previously. The role of Kashawna, who is new to her role, was also discussed. It was highlighted that her role is as internal as it is external and it's important to allow her to understand the needs of the community and equip the professional staff to meet those needs.

8. Community Leaders' Recognition and Goals

The team led by Kashawna agreed to invite community leaders for a discussion in their next meeting. They decided to acknowledge the contributions of various groups, including community organizations, in their upcoming event. The team also discussed having a recognition ceremony for the community leaders. They planned to discuss organizational goals, resources, challenges, and opportunities during the meeting. Additionally, they aimed to finalize the details of a larger event planned for May.

9. SWOT Analysis, Feedback, and Reparations Discussed

Kashawna shared the SWOT analysis and a feedback email with the group. She also mentioned a letter from Senator Lewis about reparations, which she planned to re-share with the group. The team decided to postpone discussions about their schedule and timeline to the next meeting. HCH suggested getting a summary report and Kashawna agreed to share it via email. The team also discussed reaching out to commissioners who had not been attending meetings regularly. The next meeting was scheduled for the fourth Thursday in March.

Summary

The team discussed feedback from a recent webinar, focusing on improving the online experience and ensuring more time for key points. They agreed on the need for improved tech support for future events, with Kashawna proposing the inclusion of a senior tech member. The team also discussed the need for more honest community dialogue and the importance of policy commitments to equity, anti-racism, and full inclusion. They proposed inviting community leaders to a future meeting and emphasized the roles of participants in town hall meetings.

Next Steps

1. Create a newsletter or update summarizing the event and providing a way for community members to submit additional feedback.
2. Ensure tech support is available throughout the entire event.
3. Improve communication with commissioners about the flow of the meeting and their participation.
4. Consider strategic planning and team building within the Commission.
5. Kashawna will coordinate with the team members attending the REACH program to share insights and possibly conduct a mini workshop at the next meeting.
6. Kashawna will forward the letter from Senator Lewis and the SWOT analysis and feedback email to the group.

7. Kashawna will check in with the youth leaders to see how they are doing.