

Town of Needham
Equity Toolkit Subcommittee
Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative Working Group
Minutes for February 3, 2022

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnRIaoqMv_0&list=PL3PRZZjHC3yE0eZ-rrW5RDdybU0e1R91L&index=4

Members Present: Chair Jay Spencer, Natasha Espada, Marcus Nelson
Members Absent: Toyin Fayemi

7:30 p.m. **Call to Order:** Chair Spencer convened the meeting of the Equity Toolkit Subcommittee to the Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative working group.

Mr. Spencer announced this open meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020 due to the current state of emergency from the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. She noted all public gatherings have been suspended as advised and directed by the Commonwealth. And, as such, suspending the requirement of the open meeting law to have all meetings in a public, accessible, physical location while encouraging and allowing members of all public bodies to participate remotely. She stated the meeting will not include public comment and the Education Subcommittee of the Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative working group and all attendees are convening by Zoom, as posted on the Town's website identifying how the public may join. All supporting documents used at this meeting are available on the Town's website www.needhamma.gov.

Members discussed developing a checklist for a Race Equity Toolkit based on two documents used for the Race Equity 101 Program.

The purpose of the Toolkits is to provide a method of measuring success for boards and committees who have adopted the NUARI vision statement and guiding principles to hold themselves accountable to the standard or questions proposed.

Each committee is different but needs a basic Checklist to tell them what to do. Members will send questions to Kate Fitzpatrick and Chair Marianne Cooley which they propose to ask Town boards and committees to use as part of the process.

- How diverse is a board?
- When appointing members, is there a way of making that equitable?
- Has the Board asked those in the minority of your group if they feel safe and included?
- Some boards look homogenous in makeup.
 - If everyone feels things are okay the way they've done it the past 20 years, how do you change that mindset, look at things from another lens?
 - Create a platform for discussion, a 360-degree lens

The Checklist should be part of an ongoing process for each project so it becomes systemic.

In the Race Equity Toolkit for local and regional government, key pointers:

- Proactively seek to eliminate inequities and advance equities.
- Identify clear goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes.
- Be able to give community engagement in the decision-making processes.
- Make sure those who will benefit or those who will be burdened by the decision look at it and determine the unintended consequences.

Members discussed NUARI members staying engaged with Town committees and boards to provide leadership through the process.

- See how they answer the questions and commit to due diligence.
- If this is a priority for the Town, committees will make sure it becomes priority.
- Make sure the process is sustainable no matter who is on the board.
- Who is the single person corralling committees and boards to make sure they do the reviews?

Members discussed the need for a DEI / HR person (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) to hold checkpoint meetings through the year for accountability within the process.

- If you feel you've been inclusive, where have you reached out?
- Where are those touchpoints? What has the response been?
- If you've done these things, and you say there has been no response, have you talked with different board leaders, community leaders in different organizations and non-profits? This is where we're dropping the ball. We will be able to see the problem.

Members proposed a six-step process for the Race Equity Toolkit to be reviewed with NUARI members at the 2/7/22 meeting. Chairs of boards and committees would use this six-step process.

Step 1: Establish Benchmarks

What are the goals and the desired results and outcomes?

Evaluation Criteria:

Community	Employment	Policing
Housing	Transportation	Town or government

Step 2: Focus on the impact

What is the data? What does the data tell us?

Evaluation Criteria:

- Who benefitted?

- Who did not benefit?

Step 3: Engage people who might not be normally engaged

Community engagement: Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

Step 4: Advance racial equity/Mitigate unintended consequences

Evaluation Criteria:
Does intention match impact?

Step 5: Implementation

Evaluation Criteria:
Realistic
Adequately funded and staffed

Step 6: Ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results

- Hire/allocate DEI/HR person who is part of Town staff
- Ensure Equity Reviews are performed by committee chair
- Chair should provide Equity Summary
- Evaluate Equity Summary for completeness and feedback from independent advisory board
- Hold checkpoint meetings throughout the year for accountability

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance - None.

8:15 p.m.

Adjourn

Motion: M. Nelson moved to adjourn.

Seconded: N. Espada

Roll Call Vote: N. Espada, yes; M. Nelson, yes; J. Spencer, yes

Motion Carries: 3-0