

MINUTES
ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING
JULY 12, 2021

Present: Valerie Light, Kayon Morgan, Patricia Alston, Kirk Hart, Samantha Rival, Bobbye Knoll Peterson, Precious Price, Brian Gartner, Stephen DeVoto, Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell, Councilman Darnell Ford, Chair Sacha Armstrong-Crockett, Councilman Gene Nocera, Deputy General Counsel Kori Termine Wisneski

1. Call to Order.

Meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m.

2. Public Comment.

No public in attendance. Councilman Darnell Ford closed the public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Brian Gartner made a MOTION to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2021 Anti-Racism Task Force Regular Meeting. The Motion was seconded by Kayon Morgan. The Motion passed unanimously. Only ten members of the committee were present when this MOTION passed. Councilman Gene Nocera and Precious Price were not present during this vote.

4. New Business.

- A. NCCJ Report (standing item) – Stephen DeVoto spoke about the history and purpose of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He explained how this commission has shaped the City of Middletown for decades. The Commission decides where there should be housing, retail, industry within the residential category, and location of multi-family and single family housing. By state statues, the commission has the right to write the zoning code for Middletown and has complete control of zoning. Stephen spoke about housing segregation and how people of color and other minorities groups do not have equal access to housing which is multi-facet thru banking, the sale of properties and the information flow. The zoning codes for several towns and cities have been documented. These codes were established years ago where there were in many cases codes that restricted people out of certain neighborhoods. NCCJ report recommendations are to create mixed housing communities and move away from concentrating residents who require assistance in dense areas so they can be better integrated into the community and take advantage of better resources. Stephen has looked at a model done at the state level called Desegregate Connecticut. A group of planning professionals came up with a set of recommendations to desegregate towns and cities in Connecticut in response to the murder of George Floyd. A series of changes were signed into law by Governor Lamont in late May/June which will take effect next year that will impact all the towns and cities in the state. This will be changing the framing of zoning questions. Towns and cities are not allowed to ask about income sources, cap the number of multi-family units, or require a minimum square footage. However, towns and cities will be allowed accessory dwelling units. By allowing accessory dwellings units, this will increase affordable housing and have the effect of desegregating Connecticut. The last topic Stephen spoke about was the 20/30 Conservation Plan for Middletown that provides guidance for the City of Middletown on

decisions in the areas of housing, economic development, transportation and the environment. The theme is sustainability in all dimensions including housing equity.

- 1) Discussion on status of HR request (labor equity) – The Anti-Racism Task Force went to the Common Council during the budget hearings and requested that a position be created to focus on inclusion and diversity. A job description was created with Task Force members and the director of Human Resources, Justin Richardson. The purpose of the Human Resources Specialist is to focus on recruiting, testing candidates, and strategic diversity recruitment within the City workforce. This position will also staff the Anti-Racism Task Force.
 - 2) Discussion with Deputy General Counsel Kori Termine Wisneski of Civilian Review Board and the police union contract - The Anti-Racism Task Force asked questions pertaining to the Middletown Police Department union contract and Attorney Wisneski addressed all of the committee's inquiries.
- B. Vote on acceptance of Mission Statement and Goals with glossary - MOTION made by Councilman Darnell Ford. The MOTION was seconded by Samantha Rival. The MOTION passed unanimously. Only ten members were present at the time when this MOTION passed. Kirk Hart and Brian Gartner were not present during this vote.
- C. Discussion on Anti-Racism Task Force retreat dates: August 9th and 10th, 2021; retreat will take place both days from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.; location for August 9th is in person at City Hall in the Council Chambers; location for August 10th is via WebEx. It was noted during this meeting that the start time for both meetings is 6:00 p.m. and not 5:00 p.m.

5. Adjournment.

MOTION to adjourn made by Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell. The MOTION was seconded by Valerie Light. The Motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.