



Legislation Text

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FROM:

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SUBJECT:

Report to the Town Council Summarizing the Work of the Racial Equity Ad Hoc Committee

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Town Council receive an oral report summarizing the work of the Racial Equity ad hoc committee.
2. That the Town Council establish the Racial Equity committee as a standing committee by adopting the attached Resolution. (Attachment 2)
3. That the Council approves funding for the diversity, equity and inclusion audit of the Town's policies and procedures.

BACKGROUND

The Town Council issued a statement on Tuesday, June 9, 2020, in support of the movement known as "Black Lives Matter." Town Council officially joined in the national protest of the killing of George Floyd and urged all residents of San Anselmo to continue to work to be honest about and rectify our country's history of racial injustice. In recognition of this pledge, the Town Council formed a Racial Equity ad hoc committee to examine issues of racial equity, social justice, systemic racial bias, and diversity in the Town at its November 10, 2020, meeting (Resolution 4363 attached hereto as Attachment 1).

The goals and objectives of the committee were as follows:

1. Charge: The charge of the Racial Equity Ad Hoc committee was to examine issues of racial equity, social justice, systemic racial bias, and diversity in the town and make recommendations to the Town Council on how to best address identified issues.
2. Purpose: The purpose of the committee was to ensure that the Town, its rules, policies, ordinances and staff are free of implicit biases. The committee was also to explore additional opportunities to examine and/or address issues of racial equity, social justice, systemic racial bias, and diversity in the town and develop strategies and tactics to ensure that the Town's rules, policies and laws are fair, equitably enforced and free of biases of any kind.

3. Goals and Objectives: The committee had three primary goals:
 - a. Conduct an audit of the Town's rules, policies, ordinances and other areas to be sure that they are fair, equitable and free of biases of any kind.
 - b. Explore options and implement anti-bias or other appropriate training for staff.
 - c. Explore additional opportunities to examine and/or address racial equity, social justice, systemic racial bias, and diversity issues that are within the Town's control.
4. Term: This committee was to serve for an initial one-year term following the seating of the full committee. Upon completion of the initial term, the committee would submit a report summarizing outcomes of the committee's efforts, along with a recommendation regarding continuing the committee's work, to the Town Council.

The committee was seated in late winter of 2021 and held its first meeting in May 2021.

DISCUSSION

Racial Equity Ad Hoc Committee Work

In accordance with the mandate of the committee, Committee Chair, Tiffany McElroy will present an oral report summarizing the work of the committee over the past year.

Proposed Racial Equity Committee

In recognition of the progress of the Racial Equity ad hoc committee and the need for continued work on these critical issues, staff recommends establishing a standing Racial Equity Committee, and recommends the following guidelines for service for the committee:

1. Name: Racial Equity Committee
2. Mission Statement: To identify, expose, and recommend ways to overturn far-reaching and long-standing systemic and structural racist policies, behaviors and decision making in the Town of San Anselmo and our community. The committee will strive to achieve social justice, racial equity, and inclusion by partnering with our community as well as other organizations to actively eliminate inequities, welcome many perspectives, and create a safe and inclusive town that works for everyone. The committee will educate and activate individuals and organizations to invest in interrupting racism, bias, bigotry, and prejudice as a shared responsibility to increase the success for all groups.
3. Charge: The charge of the Racial Equity Committee is to examine issues of racial equity, social justice, systemic racial bias, and diversity in the Town and to make recommendations to the Town Council related to addressing the identified issues.

4. Purpose: The purpose of the committee is to identify and address implicit biases in the Town's rules, policies, ordinances and employment practices. The committee will also explore additional opportunities to examine and/or address issues of racial equity, social justice, systemic racial bias, and diversity in the Town and develop strategies and tactics to ensure that the Town's rules, policies and laws are fair, equitably enforced and free of biases of any kind.

5. Organization:

- a. Up to seven (7) volunteer community members, plus youth member(s), may be appointed through the process outlined below. Membership qualifications include residing or working in, attending school in, or owning a business or property in San Anselmo. The committee will include two (2) Councilmembers, with up to two (2) designated Town staff liaisons in a support/advisory capacity only.
- b. The Committee will meet on a regular basis, as is determined by the Chairperson, who will be elected by the Committee members.
- c. Members are expected to attend all meetings, unless prevented from doing so by a substantial reason. In the case of an absence, members shall endeavor to notify the Chairperson at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of a meeting. Automatic removal will occur if more than three consecutive regular meetings are missed, or more than four regular meetings in six months are missed, without prior notice and substantial reason.
- d. Members should show respect for each other and engage in the following:
 - Demonstrate a commitment to racial and social justice, with passion and energy to motivate others;
 - Possess knowledge of equity and race issues, with analytical skills for systems thinking;
 - Collaborate in working across differences and organizing for collective results;
 - Provide leadership experiences and the ability to be a visible and vocal champion for equity;
 - Utilize communication skills to be a liaison and ambassador with a variety of audiences;
 - Creatively think outside the box to craft forward-thinking, innovative strategies;
 - Develop facilitation and training skills to engage in conversations about race;
 - Demonstrate humility and curiosity to continually learn and engage in self-reflection;
 - Build relationships, internally and externally, that can be leveraged to expand engagement;
 - Engage in deep, challenging, and long-term work.
- e. All new candidates will be interviewed and appointed by the Town Council, with existing ad hoc committee members being placed on the standing committee with staggered terms

of 1.5 and 3 years.

6. Terms: Members will serve three (3) year terms, provided that the first members appointed shall serve a differing number of term lengths to accomplish a staggering of the appointment schedule so that no more than one-half of the seats shall expire in any one year.
7. Brown Act: All meetings of the Committee shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

Town Policies and Procedures DEI Audit

A goal of the Racial Equity ad hoc committee was to assist with an audit of the Town's rules, policies, ordinances and other areas to be sure that they are fair, equitable and free of biases of any kind. This work requires specific expertise outside the capability of the committee and Town staff.

An extensive RFP was released in the fall of 2021 to ten firms specializing in DEI consulting work and auditing. Two firms responded, The Justice Collective and ReadySet. The bids came in at a much higher-than-expected amount. Staff asked the two firms to reduce the scope of their proposals by refocusing on the policy and procedures audit and by eliminating the housing element and staff training components. Both The Justice Collective and ReadySet responded with scaled-back proposals according to direction from staff. The two firms presented to the Racial Equity ad hoc committee at their April meeting. Committee members asked questions, considered the proposals and ultimately made a recommendation in favor of ReadySet at a cost of \$69,000. Both proposals are viewable at <https://www.townofsananselmo.org/1453/Racial-Equity-Ad-Hoc-Committee>

Upon approval, the audit can be scheduled to begin early in FY 2022-23.

FISCAL IMPACT

\$69,000 for an audit of the Town's rules, policies, ordinances and other areas to be sure that they are fair, equitable and free of biases of any kind. Funding for this service was included in the Town's FY2022-23 budget.

CEQA AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Council's discussion of this item and potential adoption of the attached resolution creating a standing Racial Equity subcommittee is not a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act, because it does not involve an activity which has the potential to cause a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. (Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 21065).

CONCLUSION

The Racial Equity ad hoc Committee has been serving the Town and Town Council for the past year. The Committee Chair's narrative showed the accomplishments, challenges and expectations moving forward. Furthermore, the Committee desires and hopes Town Council establishes it as a standing committee of the Town. Finally, as the DEI audit was part of the committee's original charge from Town Council, the funds to achieve this objective have been included in the Town's FY2022-23 budget for affirmation from Council.