



City of Twin Falls Diversity and Inclusion Committee Minutes

Wednesday, July 10, 2019, 4:00 PM

203 Main Avenue East
City Hall - Overflow Room

1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER/CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

Present: Alejandra Hernandez, Daniel Gardner, Liyah Babayan, Richard Aldama,
Stephanie Nevarez

Absent: Cole Kraut

City Staff Present:

Travis Rothweiler, City Manager; Mandi Thompson, Grant and Community Relations Manager;
Brian Pike, Deputy City Manager; Craig Kingsbury, Police Department; Anthony Barnhart, Police
Department; Leila A. Sanchez, Recording Secretary

Travis Rothweiler brought the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

2) CONSENT CALENDAR

a) Request to approve the June 10, 2019 Minutes.

Daniel Gardner moved to approve the minutes. Alejandra Hernandez seconded the motion.

Voice vote showed all members present voted in favor of the motion. Approved 5 to 0.

3) ITEMS OF CONSIDERATION

a) Presentation on an element of the committee charter by Daniel Gardner.

Travis Rothweiler explained the educational piece and importance of understanding the charter by having members of the committee share their thoughts.

Daniel Gardner spoke on Roles and Responsibilities: The role of the Committee includes: "Work to increase community awareness and education related to issues of diversity and inclusion".

Work to increase community awareness

Twin Falls is a community, but within our own community we have people with different upbringings, life experiences and beliefs. It is important to identify what that community is to us, who are we are trying to raise awareness to; and, who is that community that needs awareness and education.

How does one educate?

Mr. Gardner explained that In his classroom he educates by explaining what happens in the real world. For example, the LGBTQ and transsexual community are one of the largest population of homeless people in the country. Sometimes people are blown away with the concept that parents throw their teenage children out of their house purely because they are gay.

What are the issues that people that are minorities suffer?

They may be suffering biases and legal problems because of not understanding rules and regulations. Is it not understanding laws? Does it have to deal with race issues and people slandering?

Last concept to discuss is immigration and refugee people. Assimilation is a word he has heard from those who do not want diversity in their town. The idea of assimilation should be talked about by the committee.

Team discussion followed in response.

- Alejandra Hernandez: Defining assimilation appears to be asking others to adapt to a new environment, and as a result, asking them to let go of their heritage, history and background. This will be an opportunity for the committee to discuss this country's history. Avoid making general statements when discussing assimilation and inclusion.
- Richard Aldama: Important to clarify the committee's role and responsibilities, how are we addressing the issues of the various marginalized groups, what is the definition of assimilation to others, what are we assimilating to, and what are the ideal character, traits, and personalities. Our country was built on immigrants with different backgrounds and different languages. If the committee is asked for the definition of diversity/assimilation we can respond by asking what it means to them.
- Daniel Gardner: The word assimilation used by those who are against or uncomfortable by diversity and inclusion. Their concern includes the idea that diversity can change current traditions and beliefs. It is beneficial to learn how to speak for others in the group who are minorities when meeting with groups who are uncomfortable by diversity and inclusion.
- Travis Rothweiler: It is important to educate individuals as to why diversity and inclusion matters and to approach that issue with a level of empathy. This will help build understanding but not to the degree that we will be accepting of individuals who are not willing to acknowledge that there are differences. The committee's answers

in regards to the assimilation question will need to be consistent and with the objective of what the board is trying to accomplish, which is to create and celebrate everyone's uniqueness.

- Liyah Babayan: Assimilation has almost an expectation but the expectation is on the behalf of a community or organization for an individual who has disconnected from any responsibility to that process or a role in that process. There is no matrix, measure, tools, resources, information, or anything to compare it to. Integration implies that there is a system in place, shared responsibilities, awareness or a sense of duty by said an adoptive community, organization or an individual of that community no matter how big or small the group.
- A representative from the Refugee Center commented that most of the people in the room have a diverse background and encouraged the committee to visit people who are in a diverse culture and seek out what is their processing.
- Travis Rothweiler: Suggested scheduling a field trip to the Refugee Center as part of the committee's next meeting or a special meeting.

b) Acknowledgement of the resignation of committee member Kevin Williams

Travis Rothweiler stated that he received a letter of resignation from Kevin Williams and now is seeking interested candidates to apply for one open seat on the board. An invitation will also be extended to those who initially applied.

He is seeking two committee members to serve on the interview board.

c) Communication and creating a process for participating in community events

Stephanie Nevarez, Alejandra Hernandez, and Daniel Gardner volunteered to gather information listing civic groups, groups for listening sessions, and events. The committee will review the information at the August 7, 2019, meeting.

Team discussion followed.

Richard Ardama stated that small groups are preferred. This makes a better exchange of information and communication. Larger groups could break up into smaller groups.

Liyah Babayan asked if we have started the google doc to identify leaders in the community and events.

Mandi Thompson asked the committee if email is the most effective way to communicate

with the committee outside formal meetings. She spoke on Refugee Day and the lack of response from the board requesting attendance confirmation. It is important to schedule a day and time materials would be picked up to take to the event. Going forward, the board will acknowledge emails sent by Mandi. Discussion followed on a process of who will be attending events.

Liyah Babayan stated for clarification she confirmed her attendance to Magic Valley Pride and Refugee Day with Shawn Applewhite, Twin Falls Police Department.

Team discussion followed on ways to reach the community informing them of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

- Media

- Open house

- Utilize platform used by the City of Twin Falls

- Throw a party

Travis Rothweiler explained the importance of making connections with groups and to build bridges and opportunities. Building a list of civic groups and groups for listening sessions starts the conversation on how we can learn and better serve community members.

At the Wednesday, August 7, 2019, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the committee will review the list of civic groups, groups for listening sessions, and places sessions may be held.

d) "How to Listen"

Travis Rothweiler gave a brief update on the conference he attended at the College of Southern Idaho in which Dr. Mykee Fowlin shared the value and importance of actually listening with open ears and of interest.

This is a group advisory to the City Manager and represents the City of Twin Falls and our actions and our words in that official capacity does matter.

Liyah Babayan shared information from the "All American Conversations Toolkit" and her personal experiences on what it means to her and how to be a responsible listener.

Difference between hearing and listening

Refrain from listening with assumptions, expectations and judgement

Response from the listener validates or discredits what the person is experiencing

Deep listening with different groups including marginalized groups

Listen without speaking with your body

Trust building

Practicing deep listening

Listening to the positive and negative

Interrupting and defending erodes trust that is trying to be established

Establish a session for a follow-up to share information gathered

Team discussion followed.

- The role and skills of a facilitator
- Focus on the mindset of others
- Benefits traveling as a group
- Break into smaller groups if listening sessions become too large

e) Listening Session Topics and Community Listening Training

f) *Upcoming Activities and Events*

Scheduling a field trip to the Refugee Center.

On July 13, the Twin Falls Public Library is hosting Humans of the Magic Valley. Guest speakers will share personal experiences. Event will take place at the Farmer's Market, at 9:00 a.m.

Tara Bartley, Library Director, will be invited to the August meeting to share is happening at the library.

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 7, 2019, at 4:00 p.m., City Hall.

4) ADJOURNMENT

Daniel Gardner moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:37 p.m. Liyah Babayan seconded the motion. Voice vote showed all members voted in favor of the motion. Approved 5 to 0.



Leila Sanchez, Deputy City Clerk