

Coalition against Bias and Hate Subcommittee Meeting

11.5.15, 8:30-10:00am, Belmont AME Zion Church

Attendance

Pat Yancey, Linda Cavaoli, Clyde Tally – Chair, Ahmed Alrubaye, George Spring, Michelle Smith, George Smith, Deborah Maddox, Anh Sawyer, Esau Vance, Jayna Turchek, Che Anderson, Jesse Gibson

Summary

The subcommittee convened at Belmont AME Zion Church to review the compiled notes from the Dialogues on Race. The subcommittee was split into five groups, each with the notes from one of the following sessions: Media and online social networks, Representative government, Public safety, Youth and education, and Economic development. Each group was asked to extract the five most important, and most frequently stated, ideals/ statements/ requests/ themes from the dialogue notes. They were then tasked with comparing their list to the items addressed in the City Manager's September progress report to City Council.

Below you will find those themes and key areas, as well as colors illustrating which dialogue themes were addressed in the city manager's report.

1. Media and online social networks

- a. Themes: Comments & Critiques
 - i. Media sensationalizing negative stories in minority communities
 - ii. Media bias against certain groups
 - iii. Dehumanizes certain groups
 - iv. Reporting cycles longer for negative stories in minority community
 - v. Public can't tell difference between actual news and opinion/ editorials
 - vi. Body cameras/ other cameras will allow for more objective reporting
 - vii. Someone needs to monitor and remove abusive and racist items on Worcester Police Department FB
- b. Key areas addressed in CM Report
 - i. Installing cameras to capture police encounters will report more objectively rather than subjective feeling of encounter
 - ii. WPD will remove and monitor facebook comments that are offensive

2. Economic Development

a. Themes: Comments & Critiques

- i. There is not enough vocational training, qualification training, or employment opportunities Employment
- ii. More incubators needed for small businesses
- iii. Lack of transportation for training and work
- iv. Educators should connect businesses with schools for “real job training” and cultural competency
- v. Too much white affirmative in leadership; there is a need for leadership in cultural communities
- vi. Dire need for transparency in opportunities and planning amongst leaders in community from City Manager and Chamber of Commerce
- vii. CM has good suggestions for youth and cultural groups but there needs to be better leadership development to have him better address Arabic speakers, Vietnamese, and other cultural communities

b. Key areas addressed in CM Report

- i. Working to create a more diverse and culturally competent workforce
- ii. Expand Worcester Jobs Fund
- iii. Promote business ownerships
- iv. Providing opportunities for young people
- v. Continue to fund non-profit organizations serving racial, cultural, or ethnic minorities

3. Public safety

a. Themes: Comments & Critiques

- i. Diversity Officer will need a specific plan and accountability
- ii. Police presence needs to collaborate with community organizations
- iii. Profiling and racism needs to be addressed
- iv. Community education is needed to address root causes for opiates, sexual exploitation, etc...
- v. Training courses are needed to educate officers on proper de-escalation measures/ tactics
- vi. How do you address the internal culture of the police department?
- vii. Media portrays community of color in negative light

b. Key areas addressed in CM Report

- i. Establish a Diversity Officer
- ii. Establish a more diverse police force
- iii. Institute a stronger police presence
- iv. Development of more task forces

4. Representative Government

- a. Themes: Comments & Critiques
 - i. Elected officials don't work with diverse communities well
 - ii. Limited representation on boards and commissions
 - iii. Elected officials don't reach out to diverse communities, unless it is election season
 - iv. Councilors at large – what is their role
 - 1. Narrow scope of Community
 - 2. Nepotism within the process – reaching out only to people they know – only reaching out to community when its election time
 - v. Lack of engagement and connecting with constituents in community
 - vi. Employment in city government is not reflective of diverse
 - vii. School system is limited regarding recruitment
 - viii. City needs to do a better job in engaging and educating people in the process of voting
 - ix. Only 50 students get into Worcester Rising Civic Camp – high achieving only
- b. Key areas addressed in CM Report
 - i. Diversity being sought in local government
 - ii. Expanding efforts to educate and engage the public on the electoral process
 - iii. Reestablish Mayor's civic academy

5. Education and Youth Engagement

- a. Themes: Comments & Critiques
 - i. There are alienating barriers for parents that need to be addressed
 - ii. Diversity of faculty and administration
 - iii. Criminalization of students of color behavior needs to be addressed
 - iv. Address differences of access between have and have-nots, re: technology, language, opportunities, etc...
 - v. Better understanding via interactions between faculty, staff, students and parents (finding commonalities/ facilitating group activities)
 - vi. Existing parenting groups could be more effective
- b. Key areas addressed in CM Report*
 - i. Youth summer employment opportunities (Summer YouthCorps)

*The Youth Violence Prevention Plan addresses many of these themes