11-04-2020 Town Council Meeting
Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #10: **Government Alliance on Race and Equity Update**

Council Question:
Which Town department(s) are engaging with the other jurisdictions on developing a common framework and who is accountable for the development of the Town's Racial Equity Plan? What is the timeline for that work?

Council Question:
What is the projected timeline for the GARE leadership across OC partners to draft the shared framework?

Staff Response:
Rae Buckley (Manager's Office) and Sarah Vinas (Housing and Community) are the staff leaders of the Town of Chapel Hill GARE team. We will engage our full GARE team in the development of the plan, which includes representatives from Police, Public Housing, Manager's Office, Planning, Human Resources Development, Library, and Housing and Community. Currently, our GARE Team Leads are working with Orange County, Carrboro, and Hillsborough to draft a shared framework for building a racial equity program that will be the foundation of each individual municipal Racial Equity Plans. The framework articulates how our organizations commit to undertaking racial equity programming. For example, organizations would commit to seek input from communities most impacted when they are designing racial equity strategies. The content of the Racial Equity Plan will be the goals and initiatives that the Council sets for Chapel Hill. We are scheduled to complete the shared framework in December and will bring it to the Council in January, 2021 for review. At that time we will also seek direction from the Council about the process for developing the Chapel Hill Racial Equity Plan.

Council Question:
Is the current thinking that this framework will incorporate processes for Council decision-making (as called for in the June resolution) or is that a separate effort? If separate, what is the plan and timeline?

Staff Response:
Yes, we anticipate that this framework will incorporate processes for Council decision-making, as called for in the June Resolution. Additionally, through our Community Connections work, which centers racial equity, we are routinely applying a racial equity lens to the design and implementation of strategic initiatives, such as our language access work, Building Integrated Communities, the Northside Neighborhood Initiative, and our COVID-19 response/recovery efforts.

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Council Question:
Have any evaluations been done (post-training evaluations completed by participants) of the Visions trainings that can be shared? Have staff been surveyed to get input on how they feel the Town is addressing DEI in the workplace and any needs or ideas they have for this work?

Staff Response*:*

We no longer have the post-workshop evaluations from the 2017 and 2018 VISIONS, Inc. trainings. Attached is a summary of findings from the 2017 Employee Engagement Survey and the 2018 VISIONS qualitative employee interviews and listening sessions.

Council Question:
These efforts seem to be primarily focused on workplace DEI which is very important and I am glad we are working on it. Can the presentation/report also include efforts the purpose of which is to bring a racial equity lens to staff and Council decision-making (such as tools and skillsets to performing an equity analysis, etc.)?

Staff Response*:*

Yes, when we come to Council in the Spring we will include additional information about our efforts to apply a racial equity lens to staff and Council decision-making. As described above, we are regularly applying a racial equity lens to our initiatives and use the GARE racial equity questions to inform our design of programs and policies.

Council Question:
I was under the impression we would get a presentation on the GARE Update from staff. Is there any way we can have a presentation rather than simply a report at an upcoming meeting?

Council Question:
Why is this an information item? I strongly believe we need to make it a discussion item please.

Staff Response*:*

This is an information item to provide a status update, but does not have a decision point for Council. We felt it was important to update the Council that Chapel Hill is collaborating with Orange County, Carrboro, and Hillsborough to draft a shared GARE framework and to offer some additional information about other Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Our intention is return to Council with the shared framework for review in January. At that time, we will also seek direction from the Council about the process for how to develop the Chapel Hill Racial Equity Plan.

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Council Question:
What is the percentage of town staff that opt-in to take the voluntary DEI trainings and learning opportunities?

Council Question:
What was attendance like at the dialogue sessions recently held by Dr. Davis?

Staff Response:

Approximately 60 employees participated in four dialogue sessions with Dr. Davis that were open to all Town employees. Each of the four sessions were capped at 15 people each. Departments provided additional forums to communicate about racism. Transit held sessions with a facilitator who they have worked with before and Planning and Housing and Community held sessions facilitated by Town staff. Parks and Recreation held two in-person (socially distant) sessions for staff followed up by a virtual debrief and survey. And Police held daily sessions during the summer to help officers process national scrutiny and personal feelings. In all, we estimate that approximately half of our workforce have participated in training/learning opportunities either with Dr. Davis or department conversations.

Council Question:
What is the timeline for gathering data to evaluate trends and set goals for increasing diversity at the supervisory and middle management levels?

Staff Response:

The timeline is delayed by COVID-19. The hiring freeze and uncertainty about the future has made it difficult to have productive conversations about setting workforce goals.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

Town of Chapel Hill

Prepared by:

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION

STEERING COMMITTEE

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

The Town of Chapel Hill Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment is based on feedback received in the 2017 Employee Engagement Survey and the 2018 VISIONS qualitative employee interviews. Findings were assigned to Town RESPECT values that serve as goals in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

2017 Employee Engagement Survey

1. Managers here give assignments based on the skills and abilities of employees, not their personal and social background.	Good
2. Managers here give feedback and evaluate employees fairly, regardless of factors such as employee gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation.	Good
3. Managers here have a track record of hiring and promoting employees objectively, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, and sexual orientation.	Room for Improvement
4. Employees are provided resources and training that prepares them for promotion and advancement.	Good
5. I feel comfortable working with people from backgrounds other than my own.	Excellent
6. This organization spends adequate resources on diversity awareness and related training.	Good
7. Diversity issues prevent some work teams here from performing to their maximum effectiveness.	Room for Improvement
8. I am afraid to disagree with members of other groups for fear of being called prejudiced.	Room for Improvement
9. The "old boys" network is alive and well here.	Room for Improvement
10. I believe increasing diversity will make this organization more effective.	Good
11. I think that diverse viewpoints add value to the work we do here.	Excellent
12. Knowing more about the culture of other groups would help me to be more effective in my job.	Room for Improvement

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

2018 VISIONS Interview Findings

Systemic	1. Some departments are notably segregated by race/ethnicity and gender
	2. Certain policies and practices negatively impact certain groups
	3. Career advancement and salary increase not available to all groups
	4. Communication – especially to front line employees
	5. Upper level do the decision making without input from all voices
Cultural	6. Lack of Trust in Management
	7. Current leaders not committed to making a level playing field
	8. TOCH does not value its employees
	9. Having open conversations about racism and other inequities is difficult.
Personal/ Interpersonal	10. Micro-aggressions occur between managers and co-workers
	11. Women feel treated "less-than"
	12. Males describe how stress and mis-treatment hurt their health
	13. LGBTQ respondents feel invisible

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

2018 VISIONS Employee Recommendations

Fairness	1. Transform hiring and internal promotion policies to ensure fairness and transparency
	2. Develop career advancement and development for all levels and roles
	3. Establish greater horizontal and vertical equity in salaries and opportunities
	4. Improve transparency, specificity, and consistent application of performance appraisal
Trust	5. Adopt multiple strategies to improve employee trust in management
	6. Adopt multiple strategies to increase employee safety about airing concerns
	7. Increase engagement of employees and all levels of management in decision-making and policy development and procedural changes
	8. Address concerns with communications to ensure that all employees and contract workers have information on policies, procedures and opportunities
Inclusion	9. Create more opportunities for open communications and cross-training across units, departments, and organizational levels
	10. Senior leadership need to model and promote equity and inclusion
	11. Adopt multiple strategies to "bridge the chasm" separating managers and employees
	12. Continue to address the racial/ethnic and gender segregation of departments and units
Training	13. Provide training to improve management skills in practicing equity and inclusion everyday
	14. Provide training to address unhealed impacts of past discrimination and create opportunities for new relationships

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

2018 VISIONS Recommendations

Training and Employee Development	1.	Executive Coaching on Leading DEI Initiatives: Leading initiatives to promote greater DEI can be challenging for senior town-wide and department leaders. Individual and small group coaching can be effective in helping senior leaders balance navigating these new demands while maintaining their focus on excellence in other domains.
	2.	Training Course for Managers and Supervisors on Leading DEI: Managers and supervisors at all levels and in all departments need new skills and perspectives on managing for DEI. The course would be offered on a cross-department and/or existing team basis and could be further tailored to individual departments and roles.
	3.	Cross-department/Cross-function Personal Empowerment Course for Employees. A course on fully embracing RESPECT values while addressing internalized oppression and other barriers can assist employees in more fully participating in DEI interventions and other Town initiatives.
	4.	Town-wide DEI Champions Supervision and Skill-building Group: Eligibility for this on-going group would be extended to members of the DEI working group, human resource professionals, and other town employees. Participants would learn how to facilitate dialogue, manage conflict, and support problem solving from a multicultural perspective.
	5.	Facilitated Conversation for Stressed Units: Upon referral from human resource managers, identified work groups would be offered the opportunity to participate in facilitated conversations to identify and address the causes of elevated stress and conflict using a multicultural lens.
Structural/ Systemic Initiatives	1.	Town-wide Task Force on Performance Appraisal, Individual Career Development Plans and Career Pathways: A town-wide and cross-level task force would gather data on career trajectories and develop recommendations to ensure that all employees have access to the skills/knowledge training resources.
	2.	Town-wide Task Force on Internal Communications: A town-wide and cross-level task force would further explore the barriers to receipt of internal communications and new methods/technologies for ensuring that information is available to all employees.
	3.	Hiring, Compensation and Diversity Department-level Work Groups: With the support of human resource managers, each department would build a cross-level work group to review current practices and identify strategies within current resource constraints to address diversity and equity in hiring, internal promotions and compensation.