

MEETING MINUTES  
Easton Board of Selectmen  
August 20, 2020  
7:30 PM  
Town Hall Conference Room A

ZOOM: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82203324843?pwd=aWRuci8wL1h2elp1dk5oVWlUZ1RsUT09>

Meeting ID: 822 0332 4843

Password: 06612

David Bindelglass called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: David Bindelglass, Kristi Sogofsky and Robert Lessler

1. Robert Lessler moved to approve the minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting, July 16, 2020 with the following corrections; agenda item 8. "limited" should be "limiting", agenda item 9. Add "meeting" after Board of Finance, agenda item 12. add "get" before "together, agenda item 13. After "date" add "for a decision to be made on the grant at this time" eliminate "decision right now", agenda item 16. Add "at" after POCD. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
2. A resident commented that only the state, nation and town flags be flown and also said that a resolution to declare racism a public health issue is dangerous and insidious. Another resident sent some photos of the UI insulator not near the tree limb which was leaning against the wires; he also indicated no response from UI when calling them to report. Selectman Bindelglass mentioned that we were granted intervenor status which would allow him or others to testify at a PURA hearing. Another resident commented on how the US Flag policy was ignored recently. The resident also questioned if there is a need for the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force and if racism should be declared a public health crisis.
3. Kristi Sogofsky moved to approve the following tax refunds as recommended by Krista Kot, Tax Collector: 1. NICHOLAS SOARES - \$314.98; 2. MARILYN WARMFLASH - \$55.86. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.  
3A. Dave Bindelglass moved to add agenda item 3A. Discussion and possible action on returning driveway bond #1638 for 40 Adirondack Trail on the amount of \$3,000 as recommended by Bruce Bombero, Deputy Director of Public Works. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Robert Lessler moved to approve the driveway bond release for permit #1638 for 40 Adirondack Trail in the amount of \$3,000 as recommended by Bruce Bombero, Deputy Director of Public Works. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Kristi Sogofsky moved to approve the award of bid to McKENNEY MECHANICAL in the amount of \$77,910 for two boiler conversions to natural gas and steam boiler replacement at 660 Morehouse Road as recommended by Ed Nagy, Director of Public Works. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Robert Lessler moved to reappoint David Smith as a member of the Board of Police Commissioners for the term of 07/01/2020 - 06/30/2023. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
6. Robert Lessler moved to adopt a resolution authorizing the Board of Selectmen to enter into and with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and that David Bindelglass, as First Selectman of the Town of Easton is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Board of Selectmen and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
7. Kristi Sogofsky moved to approve Eagle Scout candidate Lucas Farmer's project as recommended by Phil Doremus, our Zoning Official, to construct a kiosk at Gilbertown Cemetery. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Robert Lessler requested that Lucas send Phil a copy of his final design for sign off.
8. Lise Fleurette presented the charge (attached) for the Easton Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDIT). After a discussion, the Board made recommendations to add the wording "with not more than three regular members of the same political affiliation" to the Board Make-up and Operating Structure section. Also, to make sure and clear that this is an advisory task force in the second bullet point under Initial Goals, add "as may be appropriate and permissible" between *evaluate* and *curriculum* in the second sub-bullet as well as in the fifth sub-bullet after *discipline records* add "as may be appropriate and permissible". Robert Lessler moved to establish the Easton Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDIT) as amended. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The Board of Selectmen will solicit nomination and/or volunteers and discuss at next meeting.
9. Elaine Okeefe a proponent of declaring racism a public health crisis in Easton reviewed the goals and the intent of the resolution. Several other Connecticut towns have adopted similar measures. The goal of the resolution is to reduce adverse health impacts on people of color in our community by gathering and analyzing data, creating relationships, and promoting policies that enhance diversity and ensure anti-racism. David Bindelglass moved to pass the Easton Resolution on Racism and Public Health. (attached) Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
10. Kristi Sogofsky presented the proposed Flag Policy. After a discussion regarding criteria and discretion of the Board of Selectmen, the policy was amended to remove the word "regular" before Board of Selectmen in item 3. and add "inclusive dates". (attached) David Bindelglass moved to adopt the Flag Policy as amended. Kristi Sogofsky seconded.
11. David Bindelglass gave an update on Coronavirus. Movie night went well and discussed the fireworks display scheduled for September 12, 2020. The town is still doing very well and more sports are starting up but we have to be cautious as we have seen in the news how places open and need to modify weeks later. Some Senior Center activities will occur such as flu shots and registration for Medicare under the guidance of Val Buckley, Alison Witherbee and Mark Cooper. Town Hall remains largely closed to the public, with certain departments available by appointment only. Easton participates in the state's Cares Act which reimburses for PPE supplies.

12. A resident criticized the adoption of the resolution declaring racism to be a public health crisis. The resident said there is no evidence presented to support the need for the resolution. It is not clear that racism is the cause of health issues in communities of color. Another resident repeated her original concern about the flag policy. She noted that there is no flag in the room where the Board of Selectmen meets and she feels there should be one. This resident also raised a point she has made repeatedly in the past that the Pledge of Allegiance should be recited at the start of the Board of Selectmen meetings. The resident also spoke of Black Lives Matter, George Soros and Saul Alinsky as part of something referenced as "open society". She said racism is not a public health crisis. The resident also said that the last day for public comment or testimony regarding the performance of the electric utilities during the recent storm is September 24. Another resident thanked the board for their work during and after the storm and for being open-minded about addressing issues surrounding people of color. A few other residents agreed with comments made from previous residents.
13. Robert Lessler requested anyone wanting to find out about upcoming events for the anniversary celebration should go to [www.easton175.com](http://www.easton175.com) and graciously thanked EMS for providing the firework display. Kristi Sogofsky inquired whether the newly appointed member of the Board of Education would be resigning from her seat as an alternate on the Board of Finance. David Bindelglass said has lived in town through several storms and outages and wanted to thank the incredible public servants, Public Works, Police, Fire and EMS for the work they did and have been doing especially when moving around the "make safe" crews, incredible job!
14. Robert Lessler moved to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3A~08.20.20

# Easton Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDIT)

## Charge

### **Statement of Purpose**

The town of Easton, CT acknowledges that implicit bias damages our community. It undermines the key foundational American principles of fairness and equity and respect for individual rights. Implicit bias inflicts severe and measurable harms on all people, especially people of color who continue to experience highly inequitable educational, social, economic, medical, environmental, and health outcomes as compared to white Americans.

Public policy experts report that population growth in the US is slowing while demographic diversity is growing. The Easton Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDIT) will help Easton embrace a future where diversity is an advantage.

EDIT is a resource for town leaders across all town departments, boards, and commissions on the policies and practices that most effectively undermine systemic racism in our institutions and our community. The board will advocate and advise, and offer tools and resources to help town leaders, boards, commissions, and citizens learn how to recognize and mitigate the effects of implicit bias within Easton.

### **Board Make-up and Operating Structure**

EDIT shall consist of five members appointed by the Board of Selectmen, not more than three of the same political affiliation. Three members shall be appointed to a term running until January 2, 2023, and two members shall be appointed to a term running until January 2, 2022. Thereafter, terms shall run for three years. There shall be two alternate members. The initial term of one alternate shall run until January 2, 2022, and the initial term of the second alternate shall run until January 2, 2023. Thereafter, alternates shall serve a three-year term.

The members shall choose from among their members, a chair and a secretary.

### **Initial Goals of Easton Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDIT)**

- Work with town department heads to promote:
  - The recruitment, retention, and promotion of people of color for town positions.

- Engaging small businesses owned or operated by people of color to bid for opportunities to do business with the Town.
- Work with the Easton and regional school boards and other education-related stakeholders to:
  - Promote the recruitment, retention, and promotion of people of color for positions within Easton and regional schools.
  - Review and evaluate as may be appropriate and permissible, curriculum changes recommended by the individual Easton and Regional Boards of Education diversity task forces to ensure lessons accurately reflect the impacts of implicit bias and overt racism on America's past, present, and future.
  - Support a student exchange program where Easton and regional students share in reciprocal visits and school field trips with surrounding, more demographically diverse school districts.
  - Support Easton and regional schools' ongoing, active participation in the State of CT's Open Choice Program that gives urban students the opportunity to attend public schools in nearby suburban towns.
  - Monitor Easton and regional school discipline records as may be appropriate and permissible, for evidence of disproportionate minority contact (DMC).
- Work with relevant town departments to document instances where:
  - Potential racial bias is in question;
  - The 911 system was potentially used to harass people of color.
- Promote and distribute high-quality anti-racism programming to all town departments, town and regional school systems, and the public.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AUGUST 20, 2020

## Easton Resolution on Racism and Public Health

**WHEREAS** racism is a complex and pervasive problem that must be acknowledged and addressed by all communities;

**WHEREAS**, racism has multiple dimensions: individual racism that is interpersonal and/or internalized or systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks;

**WHEREAS**, racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities;

**WHEREAS** racism is a root cause of poverty and constricts economic mobility;

**WHEREAS** racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life including health, housing, education, employment, and criminal justice;

**WHEREAS** an abundance of research studies have linked racism to disproportionately poor health outcomes in people of color;

**WHEREAS** racism and segregation have exacerbated a health divide in our state resulting in people of color in Connecticut bearing a disproportionate burden of illness and death in numerous areas including COVID-19, heart disease, diabetes, infant mortality, HIV/AIDS and more;

**WHEREAS** Black, Native American, Asian and Latino residents are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of inequities in economic stability, education, physical environment, housing, food, and access to health care and these inequities are, themselves, a result of racism;

**WHEREAS** racism is a serious public health issue that has been made ever more apparent in the disparate impact of the COVID pandemic on people of color in Connecticut and across the country;

**WHEREAS** multiple towns across Connecticut have passed resolutions declaring racism a public health crisis in response to the heightened focus on racial inequity and injustice that is happening in our nation, state and local communities including Easton;

**WHEREAS** Easton is committed to strengthening public health protections, policies and services for its residents and the Town has entered a contractual agreement with the Westport-Weston Health District to enhance its public health program;

**WHEREAS** Easton is forming a new Diversity and Inclusion Task Force that will serve as a resource for Town departments, boards, and commissions to support policies and practices

that undermine systemic racism, promote equity and mitigate the effects of implicit bias within Easton;

and **WHEREAS** the collective prosperity and wellbeing of Easton depends upon equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, that the **Board of Selectmen of Easton** acknowledge that racism is a growing public health concern affecting our town and all of Connecticut and will:

1. Work to identify and support specific activities to enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across our leadership, staffing and contracting practices;
2. Promote racial and health equity in policies approved by the **Board of Selectmen** and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of health and social services, our educational system, economic development and public safety;
3. Strive to improve the quality of the data our town collects and the analysis of that data to assess the presence and impact of inequities in our community and continuously improve;
4. Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism;
5. Further work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis;
6. Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage with communities of color wherever they live; and
7. Assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN ON AUGUST 20,2020

# TOWN OF EASTON

## FLAG POLICY

Only the United States, State of Connecticut and Town of Easton flags shall be flown outside of Easton Town Hall.

### PROCEDURES

1. Raising and lowering of the American flag will be done in accordance with the U.S. Flag Code, which includes the following:
  - a. The flag shall be displayed from sunrise to sunset unless illuminated at night.
  - b. The flag should not be displayed during inclement weather unless it is an all-weather flag.
  - c. When flags of states, cities or organizations are flown on the same staff, the U.S. flag must be at the top.
2. No flag shall take the place of the American flag outside of Easton Town Hall.
3. Any special interest group or organization seeking to have its flag flown outside of Easton Town Hall shall submit a written request to the Board of Selectmen for consideration. Requests must be submitted with enough notice to allow for discussion at a Board of Selectmen meeting. Requests must include the group's name and description, reason for the request and inclusive dates for requested display.

APPROVED BY BOARD OF SELECTMEN AUGUST 20, 2020