



City of Malden

Malden City Hall
215 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Meeting Minutes - Final Personnel/Appointments Committee

Councillor Chris Simonelli, Chair
Councillor Amanda Linehan, Vice Chair
Councillor Paul Condon
Councillor at Large Carey McDonald
Councillor Barbara Murphy

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

5:30 PM

City Hall, Rm#105
215 Pleasant Street

Roll Call

Present: 4 - Councillor Chris Simonelli, Councillor Amanda Linehan, Paul Condon and Carey McDonald

Also Present: Councillor Colon-Hayes
Maria Luise-Mayor's Office
Alicia McNeil-Assistant City Solicitor
Bybiose LaRochelle-DEI Coordinator

Councillor Simonelli called the meeting to order at 5:37 P.M.

Minutes to be Approved

[116-22](#)

Minutes of March 8, 2022 to be approved.

This Committee Minutes was tabled to the Personnel/Appointments Committee

Business

[117-22](#)

The Committee will conduct interviews of the following candidates being considered for appointment by the Council as the two Council-appointed resident members on the Racial Equity Commission:

Kevin Graham
Theodor Janne Shahan
Tiffany J. Wang
Abraham Ndiwane

Following interviews, the Committee will discuss the candidates under consideration and moving forward with recommendations on candidates.

Following discussion, votes may be taken on the Committee's recommendation on appointments to the two seats.

Councillor Simonelli said we are down to two candidates. Abraham Ndiwane could not make the interview and Tiffany Wang withdrew her application. Lisa Cagno, Clerk of Committees stated that Abraham did reach out and could not make the meeting tonight but could be available if the committee agreed next week.

Councillor Murphy said she was impressed with Abraham's resume and asked the Clerk if he did have an interest and she answered that he did and he would make time to come before the committee next week if possible

Councillor McDonald agrees with Councillor Murphy and said if we put the appointments on the docket and have a meeting next week we could still stay on track

Councillor Simonelli said he has no problem bringing Abraham in he wants to get the best quality of candidates

Motion to bring Abraham Ndiwane in next week for an interview was made by Councillor Murphy and seconded by McDonald. All were in favor.

Councillor McDonald asked how they will handle these interviews

Councillor Simonelli said you are the committee so you can ask whatever questions you would like one at a time. He explained that this commission is tasked with a lot of work and who will be overseeing this curriculum

Bybiose LaRochelle said right now she is solely convening this commission but they will choose a Chair and this will be a collaborative effort. They do have a licensed social worker on the commission. They are looking for an educator. She has a background in criminal justice and mental health in general also. It is a lot of work and they are committed to the work. She is reaching out to organizations regarding DEI training for the City Council, who will be willing to support this group and she is also looking for grants to help to pay for the DEI consulting firm. They will help with interviews and the work as a whole.

Councillor Murphy said to the interview process going round robin and move it around so everyone has a chance to ask their questions.

Councillor Simonelli agrees. He mentions that in the future this commission could be helpful with a multi cultural center. He invites Kevin Graham to come before the committee.

Kevin Graham-He lives in Malden across from Everett. He is retired from NYC transit, he worked for Mattress Discounters and he now works he is semi-retired and is a fabricator of furniture . He is the father of three.

Councillor McDonald asked if he has read the act the resolve of the Racial Equity Commission and asked if he could talk about personal and professional experiences he has with doing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work at the community organizational level and asked what he thinks are the key racial and equity issues in Malden

Kevin said none whatsoever other than coaching and his life experience. He was born to West Indian parents who lived in NY and by the age of five moved to Alabama that became his biggest education in Racial, Diversity and Equity. His parents being West Indian they were never allowed them to use the behavior of other as an excuse for themselves. They were held to their own personal standard of right from wrong it was all his life experience. It has not been his career or something he studied just life experience. He said in the 60's we were looking for racial equality and he feels that is the wrong direction you need racial equity to get to racial equality. His first experience of racism was when he was 10 years old. His father taught him that if he is secure in what he is and what other people think of and their behaviors he needs to take personal responsibility it starts with him. He has seen a lot of change in this country from 1965 to now and we still have a ways to go.

Councillor Linehan asked him to talk about some points in his cover letter such as socioeconomics being a large part of inequality and how a commission like this could fill social potholes and how open dialogues could help with mutual understanding and talk

about how he could bring that to the commission if he was to join

Kevin said his life experience and the roads he has been on he finds Malden to be a blueprint that could be used socially in life and focuses on the Police Station. On June 18, 2022 the Mayor declared racism as a public health issue, when he thought about it if racism is a public health issue is a racist ill. We treat people who are ill with empathy. He feels dialogue is required to understand each other. The best friendships are often those tested with disagreements and you still remain friends. He feels it starts with communication first. He has known many people he may not like because he heard that but when he understands who they are what matters to him is how they affect his life. Not judging the book by the cover the content is what matters.

Councillor Murphy said this is an 18 month project and would you be willing to commit to that and staying in Malden

Kevin said yes Malden is his home and he feels this is an opportunity to give back to the community

Councillor Murphy asked about working with others and in a group and if he has any specific qualities he may have that will relate to this committee there may be some discussion where people don't agree and how would he react to that

Kevin said he hopes that this committee has some disagreements to work out or the work would be for not. As far as working as a team he has played football and also worked for the NYC T and sometimes you have to be a catalyst to stir up situations but the bottom line it is necessary to respect what a person believes. You have to find common ground.

Councillor Condon asked what do you think you could bring to this commission that will benefit this community

Kevin said his experience what he went through in life, holding himself accountable. He said he has seen this country change from the eyes of personal color but not as the eyes of personal color that was angry. He has the life he is proud of and content with not letting other peoples ideals effect his life.

Councillor Simonelli thanks him for coming in before this committee. He then continues with the next candidate Theodor Janne Shahan:

Janne explains she is a resident of Malden and has been for eight years. Her husband works a MVRCS and they are originally from California. They have four children. Her background is in aquatics and recreation. She runs the aquatic program which is run by student leaders and she took on the recreational program at MVRCS. She wanted to apply for this position is that something in her home they have always taught their children when you are blessed you should always give back and she would like to have the opportunity to serve.

Councillor McDonald asked if she has read the requirements for this commission and that the commission has a big job ahead of it and could you tell us the personal and professional expertise you could bring to it

Janne said her Mom was a refugee and her life experiences as a kid has given her the gift of empathy. Professionally, she has been given the chance to work with student volunteers and also with her church community volunteering to unite families and bring them together. She is the farm share coordinator for a co-op in Melrose and they still volunteer and drop off to the Bread of Life in Malden helping the community

Councillor McDonald asks what she feels are the biggest racial equity issue concerns are in Malden or what you would hope the commission focuses on

Janne said she feels language issues and feels that so many people have problems such as filling out medical forms and she does not know if those resources are readily available

Councillor Murphy asked if she would be committed for 18 months and remain living in the City for that time

Janne said yes she will be available absolutely

Councillor Murphy asked if she could give examples teamwork of groups and how you

have worked with and something you have mitigated and some of your experiences Janne said she currently runs a home schooling co-op where the Moms get together and they share teaching load of responsibilities and making sure the Moms teaching are equipped and helping them to be prepared. She is available however they need her to be such as classroom management, curriculum or just being prepared.

Councillor Condon asked what do you think you could add to this committee is there anything you see the City of Malden can improve in

Janne said she has grown to love the City of Malden and her roots are very attached to Malden. She said just the ability to serve the families well and making sure Moms are supported and that there are many services available for families in what the City is offering. She brings the aspect of being a busy Mom with the Library, storytime, soccer and being at the park in that community phase of life touching bases with other families.

Councillor Simonelli said this is an 18 month program you seem like a great organizer what would your priority on this committee if you were able to join

Janne said people may be struggling with getting jobs and writing a resume and maybe getting a separate facility to have people volunteer their time creating a service where people can help the community in a way to give back to the community.

Councillor Simonelli said he feels everything she is saying is resignating the project of creating a multi-cultural center which would be able to assist people in the community who need further resources and services that are available that they don't know because of a language barrier.

Janne said 70% of kids graduating from high school who are first generation American transfer into a Jr. college or college but they are not graduating they check out after that. She feels communication or resources to help students out would be helpful to give these kids an opportunity.

Councillor Colon Hayes asked if working with the families have you come across any racial issues or that you are aware of

Janne said that she has not exactly run into a racial issue with someone being blatantly disrespectful it has not been her experience. In the Library, soccer there are resources she feels what she is seeing is missed opportunities in a way to grow something or serve more people or kids so that they have experience when they are going out into the world.

Other Business

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Councillor Paul Condon, seconded by Councillor Chris Simonelli, that this meeting be adjourned 6:47 P.M.. The motion carried unanimously.