

Draft of the Minutes, EDIT Meeting of September 28, 2023, on Zoom

Present: Chair, Jonathan Tropp, Challa Flemming, Vice Chair, Rick Bolton, David Rosenburg, Tara Figueroa, Chris Powell

Also Present William Chin, Town of Trumbull Technology Director, Joanne Glasser Orenstein, Clerk, Rodney Gray, member of the public, Jame Cordone, Town Attorney

Mr. Tropp called the meeting to order at 7:32pm. Mr. Tropp noted the meeting being held a week late as duly noticed, as last week no quorum was available.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and roll call completed.

Public Comment: None.

Mr. Bolton made a motion to accept the Minutes of August 27, 2023, Mr. Rosenberg seconded. VOTE: all in favor.

Rodney Gray was introduced and invited to speak. Mr. Gray moved into Trumbull in November of 2021. He was just getting settled in on a Sunday morning when he was taking a walk near St. Catherine's Church and two policemen pulled over. They had gotten a call that he was suspicious and looking into cars. They questioned him quite a bit; he asked them for a ride home, so they could see where he lived and he could get his ID, but they declined. After he got home, he went to the Police Department and reported he was racially profiled. He works at ESPN in Bristol and he told them his story: they were outraged. Mr. Gray's wife Therese participated in EDIT's forum and told the story. Afterwards, he met with Chief Lombardo and Mrs. Tesoro a number of times. ESPN had him meet with corporate citizenship, who told him they could not support Black Lives Matter, but they can connect with a non-profit (and he is connected with CONECT), so they are funding him through that.

Mr. Gray has met lots of officers, usually while out for a run, and three months ago an officer told him he was one who had pulled him over. He said the calls made to the police make them look bad, but they are required to investigate them. Mr. Gray has organized the Trumbull Community Campaign, which will be held Saturday October 21, from 11-2pm, at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on White Plains Road. Among those who will be present are State Senator Marilyn Moore, First Selectman Tesoro and Chief Lombardo. The Chief was in once he knew it focused on diversity. Mr. Gray noted he reached out to Dr. Semmell, who said the school administration could not participate but is very supportive, and he invited Mr. Gray to participate in school programs. Mr. Gray was disappointed by this response. He has reached out to every department head in the Town, and most are very welcoming.

Mr. Tropp commended Mr Gray for turning an unfortunate experience into a positive action. Ms. Figueroa thanked Mr. Gray for all he is doing. She noted a similar thing had happened in Weston, which created a long conversation in that town.

Mr. Gray said he did not file a police complaint, his focus was more on the caller than the police officers. Mr. Rosenberg asked if this story was discussed with Chief Lombardo when he met with EDIT. Mr. Tropp answered that the discussion focused on police policies rather than any individual incident, as the Chief is constrained not to speak about specific incidents. In response to a question from Mr. Rosenberg, Mr. Gray said the police have told him they have reached out to the caller a number of times but have had no response.

Mr. Gray would appreciate EDIT's help in promoting the upcoming Trumbull Community Campaign, and Mr. Tropp responded that this was one reason he had invited Mr. Gray to speak with the committee.

Old Business: Library:

The poster prompt is coming: what does Equity/diversity mean to you?

The first Book Club meeting is November 6 at 6pm, discussing "The Sum of Us."

The panel on Censorship is Thursday October 5 at 7pm. Ms. Flemming will be moderating, and the panelists are Matt Bracksieck, Julia McNamee, Sarah Keitt and Dave Rutigliano. The committee all agreed to have Trumbull Community TV broadcast and record if the panelists do not object.

Trumbull Historical Society:

Mr. Tropp reported the society is reaching out to Paugassetts to see if they will do a mid-November program that we might support.

Trumbull Equity Profile, pages 9- 18

Education: Ms. Figueroa says she struggles with the report, as there are many gaps in the information. Ms. Flemming said it's up to EDIT how to best proceed with the information provided. Mr. Tropp is unsure if town departments are using the data. Ms. Figueroa said that TPAUD has a lot of data, with a different focus, but that hints to the same information. She added that HR has a lot of data on diversity within the town departments.

Economic Issues: the median income in Trumbull is higher than average, but that salaries within the town are lower than average. It appears that black women have a higher median income than black men in Trumbull, as distinct from gender differences among other town populations.

Mr. Rosenberg noted most of the data is from 2019/2020 and thinks given how much things have changed since then, much of it is likely to be out of date.

#### Income and Wealth:

Trumbull looks better compared to comparisons provided, there is no material difference between races with respect to household income. Trumbull is good in vehicle ownership compared with the State.

In 2019, there appears to have been a rebound of the middle income earners in Trumbull.

Mr. Tropp said the next 8 pages of the study will be discussed in October and he intends to schedule time for discussion of the next possible steps when the committee completes its review of the report.

Ms. Figueroa said the raw data is available from Data Haven. The bottom line is good data is needed to make meaningful change.

#### Essay Contest

Ms. Flemming said the suggestion is to put a pin in the contest for now, due to lack of resources for prizes, primarily. Reflections is a nationally organized PTA program, so it is not an area for collaboration. After discussion, it was agreed to revisit the essay contest in 2024.

#### Diversity Training

Mr. Rosenberg followed up with Mr. McCarthy, and is waiting to hear from their vendor.

#### Coverage in Trumbull Times

Mr. Tropp will try to get coverage of the Censorship panel and the Book Club.

#### New Business

##### 2024 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Tropp will put a schedule together for the October meeting, at which time the committee will discuss and agree upon a meeting schedule for 2024, including whether to have meetings in person or on zoom.

##### 2024 Programming

The committee discussed what we want to do as part of collaboration with other departments, since EDIT has no budget. Ms. Flemming said there needs to be a commitment from EDIT, but also the Town Departments need to recognize EDIT as a resource, which is up to EDIT to remind them of. The committee agreed to discuss the matter further at the next meeting, after

which it intends to reach out to the various departments and have Mrs. Tesoro remind the departments that they should consider collaborating.

Mr. Tropp said Sustainable Connecticut has been mentioned as a mechanism for a purse and promised to investigate.

Ms. Flemming made a motion and Ms. Figueroa seconded, to recognize Mr. Gray. He asked when EDIT was formed and wanted confirmation that EDIT has never had a budget. Mr. Tropp said EDIT was formed in July 2020 and began meeting in October 2020, and has never had an independent budget.

Ms. Flemming requested a list of departments and their heads.

Ms. Figueroa asked that the Value Statement for the Town be added to the next agenda as an item. Mr. Tropp will check when the next report to the Town Council is due.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Bolton, seconded by Mr. Rosenburg. VOTE: All in favor at 9:01pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Glasser Orenstein  
September 30, 2023