



**Town of Wellesley Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
Phase I Report to the Select Board
November 2022**

Presented by the Town of Wellesley Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

INTRODUCTION

Wellesley is committed to achieving diversity in our municipal organization, operation, program and policy initiatives, and throughout our community. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd, town leaders are compelled to undertake the necessary reflection, self-assessment, and training to address racism honestly and effectively. We understand that our community is contributing to racial inequality and racial bias, and as municipal and community leaders, we are committed to addressing this systemic problem.

Through the development and implementation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force, the Town of Wellesley seeks to build on the community's stated values and to identify measurable actions that will help create an atmosphere of racial inclusion in which people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds feel valued and have the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to economic prosperity.

According to the 2020 United States Census, Wellesley's population is approximately 29,550, including an estimated 4,000 people living in group quarters such as the dormitories at Wellesley College and Babson College. With a median household income of \$213,684, Wellesley has one of the highest median household incomes in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Town is 78.1 percent white, 13.6 percent Asian, 5.2 percent Hispanic or Latino, 2.9 percent Black or African American, 4.2 percent Two of More Races, and .1 percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. This relative lack of racial diversity presents the biggest challenge to weaving diversity, inclusion, and equity into the fabric of the town.

HISTORY

The Town has identified the need to establish, implement, and support ongoing initiatives to make Wellesley a community that welcomes diversity, including demographic diversity among residents (race, ethnicity, ability, age), diversity in neighborhoods (housing, schools, open space), and commercial diversity. In 2019, the Town established a Comprehensive Plan and Town-wide Strategic Plan known as the [Wellesley Unified Plan](#) which identifies diversity as a guiding principle and priority for implementation. The Unified Plan articulates the core values of the community; establishes a vision for the future of Wellesley; sets town-wide priorities and goals; and provides guidelines on strategies, tools, and specific actions to make the plan a reality. The plan includes a "Vision and Values Statement" for the next 20 years which illustrates Wellesley's desire to be recognized for its welcoming community culture.

Over the years, Wellesley has made efforts to address diversity, equity, and inclusion. Here are some of those efforts:

- Since 1966, Wellesley has participated in the [METCO](#) program, a state program that brings students to Wellesley Public Schools from Boston "to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation."
- For 50 years, the [Wellesley ABC Community School Program](#) has provided educational opportunity to young women of color who enroll in Wellesley High School and live in

the community in a supervised home setting. Nearly 100 ABC students have graduated from Wellesley High School.

- In 1989, Wellesley Town Meeting adopted an affordable housing policy under Article 31 and the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation was formed. This policy was further amended by the 1997 Town Meeting under Article 42.
- For many years the Wellesley Public Schools in partnership with the community has held multicultural festival events for families to share and highlight their cultures.
- The [World of Wellesley](#) was founded in 1990 and works collaboratively with other institutions and organizations to host events, projects, and programs that will foster an anti-racist and anti-bias community where diversity, equity, and inclusion are fully embraced.
- In 2005, Town Meeting adopted an Inclusionary Zoning bylaw to encourage the development of affordable housing.
- In 2010 and 2012, the Town Wellesley Police Department and Wellesley Fire Department were removed from Civil Service, creating more flexibility in hiring.
- In 2016, Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) began funding a contractually mandated cultural proficiency course for all educators within the first three years of employment.
- In 2016, the Board of Selectmen (now Select Board) adopted a [Tolerance Pledge](#).
- Since October 2017, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills has held a public vigil every month to ignite important conversation about white supremacy and institutional racism within our community.
- In 2017, Wellesley Public Schools DEI Leadership Council was formed and continued through 2021, evolving into the Equity Advisory Committee.
- During the 2017-18 school year, the School Department commissioned a Racial Climate Assessment, funded by Wellesley Education Foundation (WEF) and conducted by Kingston Bay Group (KBG). KBG issued this [Racial Climate Report](#) in April 2018 and WPS implemented many of the report recommendations.
- In 2018, Temple Beth Elohim (TBE) Congregants for Transgender Equity, Wellesley Village Church – Congregational, Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills, League of Women Voters Wellesley and the World of Wellesley partnered to host a community conversation on transgender equality.
- In 2019, the Wellesley Public Schools created an Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and hired a DEI Director.
- In October 2019, the Board of Selectmen and World of Wellesley hosted a “[Community Gathering & Facilitated Dialogue: What Are Our Community’s Values?](#)” as a follow up to a diversity summit held by the Board of Selectmen on January 14, 2019.
- In September 2020, the Wellesley Public Schools initiated an [Educator and Staff Experience Survey](#) to inform an Equity Strategic Plan, DEI Priorities, and overall WPS Strategic Plan.
- In 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Wellesley Public Schools DEI Director held the [Annual 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge](#).

- In 2019, Wellesley created the [Wellesley Park 40R District](#) under M.G.L. chapter 40R in an effort to expand the housing supply and the availability of lower cost housing. The 40R district substantially increased the amount of land zoned for dense housing and has added 350 multi-family housing units to date.
- Wellesley has undertaken a number of initiatives to identify the community's vulnerabilities due to climate change and to identify equitable goals and strategies for mitigation and community resilience, with a special focus on the voices, needs, and priorities of vulnerable populations:
 - 2019: [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness report](#)
 - 2022: [Climate Action Plan](#)
 - 2022: [Sustainable Mobility Plan](#)
 - 2022: Hazard Mitigation Plan *under development*
- In 2020, the Select Board received Housing Choice Community designation for Wellesley, recognizing the Town's efforts to increase and improve [housing options](#). Wellesley was recognized for best practices in zoning, including 40R, inclusionary zoning, NRPZ (cluster), and multi-family districts, use of CPC funding towards affordable housing, and recent projects that allowed the Town to achieve 10% subsidized housing inventory.
- In 2020, the Wellesley School Committee approved an [Anti-Racism Resolution](#). The Committee reaffirmed the resolution in March 2021 in the wake of a mass shooting in Atlanta that targeted Asian women.
- In 2020, the Wellesley Women's Initiatives sponsored the first Wellesley International Women's Day celebration with an aim to inspire women and girls of all ages.
- In June 2020, [Young Ethnic Scholars](#), Diversity Club, Young Democrats, and other Wellesley High School (WHS) students and graduates led marches, speeches, and rallies in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and to protest the murder of George Floyd in police custody on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis.
- In summer 2020, WHS graduates organized and facilitated [“Wake Up, Wellesley,”](#) a series of four online conference-style discussions on racism in Wellesley. Community members, current students, graduates, local professors, DEI consultants, WPS educators, staff, the Police Chief, and School Committee members were invited to participate.
- In 2020, Town Meeting voted to honor the second Monday in October as [Indigenous People’s Day](#), replacing Columbus Day. The vote was affirmed by a town-wide referendum in March 2021 and the holiday was officially adopted by the Select Board in April 2021.
- In 2020, Wellesley Public School DEI Director presented [DEI Priorities for SY20-21](#).
- In fall 2020, [World of Wellesley](#) formed the [Anti-racism Action Committee](#) to work with the larger Wellesley community to combat racism in Wellesley and beyond.
- In February 2021, the Wellesley Chinese Language School, Wellesley Chinese Action Network, and World of Wellesley co-sponsored [“Making the Invisible Visible: A Dialogue to Stop the Hate,”](#) to bring attention to a rise in anti-Asian incidents in Wellesley.

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

- In March 2021, the Wellesley Chinese Language School organized “Stop Asian Hate,” a rally at Wellesley Town Hall against anti-Asian hate crimes and racism.
- On February 22, 2021, the Select Board adopted a [Statement on Anti-Bias and Anti-Racism](#).
- In February 2021, the Select Board recommended the formation of a diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative to engage with the Town on race, equity, and inclusion, as well as the formation of a volunteer rapid response team (ultimately the [Wellesley Freedom Team](#)) to support community members who experience hate and bias in Wellesley.
- In 2021 and 2022, the Select Board supported funding for the [Wellesley Civil Discourse Initiative](#) in an ongoing effort to improve civic engagement and dialogue throughout town.
- In 2021, the Wellesley Public Schools implemented the [Equity Facilitators](#) at a majority of schools.
- WPS DEI Director developed the [2020-2025 Equity Strategic Plan](#).
- In April 2021, Central Council and PTOs held a community discussion, “How to Discuss Race with Children.”
- In 2021, the WPS DEI Director established [DEI Student Advisory Council](#).
- In March 2022, the School Department Human Resources Director provided a [Presentation of Annual HR Report to School Committee](#) with a focus on the hiring and retention of educators of color.
- Author Isabel Wilkerson and her book “Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent” were featured in a community read and online discussion in March 2022, jointly sponsored by the Wellesley Public Schools, World of Wellesley, Wellesley Free Library, and Wellesley Education Foundation.
- Wellesley was selected in School Year 2020-21 to participate in [DESE's Culturally Responsive Practices Leadership Academy \(CRPLA\)](#), featuring a combination of professional development and coaching for the district team over multiple years.
- In School Year 2021-22, the WPS Administration and School Committee set a goal to [Focus on Equity and Excellence](#).
- In spring 2022, the Wellesley Civil Discourse Initiative hosted a Values Dialogue Series for town residents, which included group discussions on race.
- In 2022, Town Meeting passed an [Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw](#), to allow more diverse housing options.
- In the past few years, through various union contracts the Select Board has placed a priority on pay parity across working and employment conditions in our region.
- In the past few years, the Wellesley Public Schools and Wellesley Free Library have implemented diversity and anti-bias training for all employees, and the Wellesley Police Department has pioneered police trainings in implicit bias and emotional intelligence.
- In 2022, the Select Board Office hosted [Racial Equity Group](#) training for Town staff entitled “Bigger Than Racism: Understanding Racialization and Structural Advantage.”
- In 2022, Town Human Resources Department held conversations with senior staff and hosted a course by the [Mae Bright Group](#) entitled “Understanding LGBTQ+ Identities.”

- In November 2022, the Select Board passed an [Anti-Semitism Statement](#) in support of Jewish residents and institutions, and denouncing anti-Semitic actions and statements.

DEI TASK FORCE BACKGROUND

In August 2020, the Town of Wellesley, through the Select Board, applied to be a part of the Racial Equity Municipal Action Plan (REMAP) program offered by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (FRBB) and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). This program was designed as a year-long assessment and planning process bringing all facets of government and community together around a shared purpose of addressing racial inequity. As part of Wellesley's REMAP application, Town staff identified the following needs and outcomes:

Project Needs:

- Address the town-wide culture around racial equity
- Apply a racial equity lens to all major work areas
- Find ways to create affordable housing and employment opportunities for people of color in our community, including college students, METCO students, town employees, and individuals in public housing
- Find ways to attract and retain a diverse pool of residents, employees, and businesses
- Find ways to create economic mobility for our residents and businesses in Wellesley
- Create housing, zoning, hiring and business development practices, policies and plans in an effort to attract a diverse pool of applicants and ensure racial equity.

Project Deliverable(s) and Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to racial equity
- Build and maintain an organizational culture of competency around issues of race and equity
- Build and maintain staff and leadership that reflect the diversity of our region
- Apply racial equity lens to all major work areas
- Develop requirements for racial equity priorities
- Encourage, mentor, and build a pipeline for participation in local government by people of color
- Investigate and remove barriers
- Integrate race and equity best practices
- Identify ways to measure and track racial equity priorities and improvements
- Identify opportunities for town departments, boards, and constituencies to provide a forum to share and discuss racial equity milestones and best practices
- Share best practices with others to teach and replicate

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

Although the Town did not secure a REMAP grant, the process helped lay the foundation for an effort dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion which the Select Board and staff immediately undertook. Early research identified some best practices and the importance of assembling diverse perspectives from throughout the community at the very earliest stage of a DEI initiative before deciding on a course of action. To help inform our process, the Select Board heard from a Senior Planner from Metropolitan Area Planning Council about the origin, goals, status, and effectiveness of the REMAP Program; the Deputy Town Manager and Human Services Director in Lexington who discussed Lexington's DEI initiative, their work with a consultant, and the role of the community; and Needham's Director of Human Resources who discussed ongoing work on recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining a diverse staff.

Ultimately, the Select Board Office decided to create an action plan that supports racial equity work and reflects best practices, both internally within our municipal government and externally throughout the community. In fall 2021, the Select Board Office created the Wellesley Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative to chart a path for the deliberate work needed to become a more inclusive and equitable community.

DEI TASK FORCE FORMATION

The Wellesley Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force convened on November 12, 2021, under the direction of Executive Director Meghan Jop and Assistant Executive Director Amy Frigulietti, with assistance from DEI consultant Lisa Smith-McQueenie. This report summarizes the work of the DEI Task Force following a year of assessment, review, and exploration.

To form the DEI Task Force, members of the community were invited to work on a mission, vision, work plan, and structure for moving forward. Twenty individuals representing a cross-section of the community agreed to serve on the task force to chart a path for the deliberate work needed to establish Wellesley as a more welcoming town for all individuals. Task force volunteers bring a broad range of identities, perspectives, and life experiences to this work and were selected from a pool of about 40 interested applicants through personal one-on-one interviews with DEI consultant Lisa Smith-McQueenie, Executive Director Meghan Jop, Assistant Executive Director Amy Frigulietti, and Public Information Officer Stephanie Hawkinson.

The DEI Task Force community members are:

Melinda Arias-Voci	Accountant, PTSO Fundraising Chair at WHS, PTSO Parent Representative Class of 2024
Gary Arthur*	Community Member
John Benzan	Community Member
Linda Chow	School Committee Member, Town Meeting Member
Tony Clark	Community Member
Leda Eizenberg	School Committee
Amy Frigulietti	Assistant Executive Director
Stephanie Hawkinson	Public Information Officer

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

Je'Lesia Jones	Writer, Town Meeting Member, Wellesley Free Library
Meghan Jop	Executive Director
Glen Kim	Community Member
Ann-Mara Lanza	Building a Better Wellesley, TBE Racial Justice Initiative, Select Board
Ayla Lari	Attorney, WPS Parent
Lisa Macdonald	Director of Equity Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at MassBay Community College
Paul Merry	Civil Rights Attorney, Board Member, World of Wellesley, Town Meeting Member
Lina Musayev	Town Meeting Member, World of Wellesley, Board Member/Chair of Anti-Racism Action Committee
Lise Olney	Select Board
Tere Ramos	Disability, Civil Rights, and Education Attorney
Odessa Sanchez	Housing Authority Board Member, Town Meeting Member, WPS Athletics
Donna Stoddard	Town Resident, Associate Dean of Faculty, Babson College
Robin Tusino**	Assistant Human Resources Director

*Filled until January 2022

**Filled until June 2022

Lisa Smith-McQueenie facilitated the group during its initial phase. Lisa is an experienced and knowledgeable DEI professional with a broad range of expertise including facilitation, training and culture change in higher education, K-12, municipalities and nonprofit organizations. Lisa currently serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at WBUR and served as Assistant Vice President at Simmons University implementing a strategic plan for DEI. During her 20 year tenure at the university, Lisa worked with students, faculty, and the administration to create a more equitable and inclusive culture.

DEI TASK FORCE PHASE I

The DEI Task Force began meeting regularly in December 2021 and together, the group established a structure, community learning agreements, language bank, scope of work, schedule, timeline, and worked on the following Phase I tasks:

- Creating a vision statement for racial equity in Wellesley
- Developing a mission statement for the work
- Developing and identifying a framework and work plan supporting the goal of racial equity
- Establishing community guiding principles and practices to support anti-bias, nondiscriminatory, and anti-racist behaviors and attitudes.

While there was significant interest among team members in addressing issues not only of race, but also gender, ethnicity, national origin, and disability, the task force agreed to focus primarily

on racial equity in Phase I. Following extensive discussions, the task force reached consensus on a vision statement that reflects the team's broader interest in DEI and a mission statement that has a scope centered around racial equity.

DEI Vision Statement for Wellesley

We envision the town of Wellesley to be a leader on issues of equity, inclusion and belonging, working to build an intentional community that respects and embraces the human dignity of every person and celebrates differences. We further envision the Town's acknowledgement of historic racism and bias, and seek the transformation of institutions, policies, actions and workforce to reflect and honor the diversity of the community. It is our vision to improve representation, participation and opportunities available to underrepresented and marginalized communities including, but not limited to black, indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA+, or due to ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or age. We will work to dismantle institutional racism, heterosexism, ableism, and bias in Wellesley.

DEI Mission Statement for Racial Equity in Wellesley

The Wellesley DEI Task Force will partner with the Wellesley community (residents, students, businesses, houses of worship, visitors, and employees) to create an environment where diverse people want to work, live, and/or open a business. We will strive with a racial equity lens to ensure that each member of the community receives fair and equitable treatment from public and private institutions and their fellow community members. Actions that support this mission:

- Tell the history of Wellesley in a broad, accurate, and honestly inclusive way
- Raise awareness about inequities and disparities in Wellesley
- Examine the challenges we face achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community and commit to formulating concrete and actionable recommendations with measurable outcomes
- Provide education and professional development – both in our community and in the municipal workforce
- Identify opportunities to create a diverse municipal workforce, encourage diverse representation within town government and throughout the businesses community
- Work with the community to implement recommendations and reach goals.

In order to set priorities, goals, objectives, and outcomes for Phase I, the task force considered a list of potential actionable items as part of the DEI Task Force work plan. In order to tackle this list, the group agreed to form four subcommittees:

- Resolution Subcommittee
- Institutional Structures Subcommittee
- Proposed Structure Post-Task-Force Subcommittee
- Community Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee.

The Equity Audit Subcommittee was added based on the Resolution Committee's findings and subsequent discussion with the task force.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Resolution Subcommittee

John Benzan, Leda Eizenberg, Je'Lesia Jones, Meghan Jop, Lina Musayev

Charge:

- **Confer with DEI Task Force to prioritize “rich content”**
- **Craft/draft resolution to be presented**

Subcommittee Work

The Resolution Subcommittee was charged with drafting an [Anti-racism Anti-bias Resolution](#) to be presented at Town Meeting. Initially we hoped to have a resolution ready for Special Town Meeting, but it became clear during our drafting process that more focus and direction were necessary before bringing forward a resolution. Both the subcommittee and the DEI Task Force at large wanted a resolution to be more than a statement of values; however, we also realized that we weren't yet sure how this work would be continued in perpetuity, i.e., with staff, a standing committee, an appointed board, etc.

We therefore determined that we needed to take a step backwards, assess where we are as a government and as a community, so that we could determine our next steps. We researched other towns that have undertaken anti-racism work and passed similar resolutions, and concluded that best practices in this area are still being developed. With collaboration and insight from the full Task Force, we were able to write a resolution that serves as a pledge to identify and strive to eliminate racism and bias, and seeks funding from the town for an equity audit that will help us undertake this work.

Conclusions and Next Steps

A new subcommittee has formed to determine what the equity audit will cover, and has determined that an assessment of governmental policies and structures, as well as a community climate survey, are both necessary. (See report, below.)

This winter, we will be sharing the drafted resolution with town boards and other stakeholders to garner support and co-sponsorship for the resolution. We recognize that broadly socializing the commitment of the resolution as well as the financial request for funds for the equity audit will be necessary to its passage at Annual Town Meeting. We will be working with other subcommittees to develop a communications plan.

During Phase I of the DEI Task Force's work, our subcommittee realized the importance of moving slowly and deliberately to garner support while also not compromising our core values of achieving equity and inclusion for all in Wellesley.

Institutional Structures Subcommittee

Linda Chow, Ayla Lari, Lise Olney, Tere Ramos

Charge:

- **Identify which town structures on which to focus for first round of DEI assessment**
- **Recommend actions to address DEI gaps**

Our charge was to examine institutional structures, including the bodies of town government and the Town workforce, through the lens of the DEI Task Force Vision/Mission Statements, and to identify town structures for the first round of DEI assessments. The initial focus was on representation and policy/training recommendations.

Subcommittee Work

We identified Town Meeting as the largest, most high profile and central institution for most residents in town. It was noted that the conduct of the most recent Town Meeting presented some DEI challenges. The Advisory Committee was also identified as being critical to the work of Town Meeting. We identified both recruitment and retention as distinct but related issues in improving representation in Town bodies. Some bodies may have a closed or clubby atmosphere that presents a barrier to meaningful participation for newcomers.

We met with the Town Moderator to learn more about opportunities to bring DEI work to Town Meeting and to understand how candidates for Advisory are identified. We discussed the importance of DEI considerations in appointments to Advisory with the goal of making the committee better reflect the make-up of the town. The Town Moderator makes all appointments to Advisory and it is essential for more diverse candidates to be connected with the Town Moderator early in the appointment process each year. We also discussed the substantial time commitment required to serve on Advisory.

We met with board members of the League of Women Voters, which has a significant role in voter and Town Meeting Member education. The League is working on videos about town government which could be very useful for broader education. We discussed a training for Town Meeting Members to facilitate respectful, inclusive, and productive discussion, for example, by incorporating community commitments like those the task force has been using, and/or by making Town Meeting Members more aware of implicit bias.

We also met with Lisa Smith-McQueenie to research avenues for such trainings or to identify professionals who would be suitable for DEI training across town boards and committees. She identified three approaches we could take: identity, bias, or language. For Town Meeting Members, we thought language might be a helpful starting point. A preliminary investigation determined that it may be difficult to find a partner for these smaller engagements and that this type of training may have to be generated internally or in cooperation with Lisa Smith-McQueenie who is already familiar with the work the Town is doing. However, there may be opportunities that we are not aware of and we should continue to investigate. Funding is also a consideration.

The League of Women Voters is receptive to incorporating a community commitments/implicit bias component into orientation for (new) Town Meeting Members. We recognize that the impact of the work may be limited given that the time available for DEI discussion may be limited, and existing Town Meeting Members may not feel compelled to attend.

The authority over appointments to Advisory and several other town boards/committees rests solely with the Town Moderator. The Moderator balances a number of factors in making appointments and makes efforts to recruit candidates throughout the town. The pool of candidates is also dependent on people making themselves or other candidates known to the Moderator. The current Town Moderator is receptive to considering DEI factors in appointing new members; however, the Town Moderator has a one-year term. A group of advisors (possibly an Appointments Committee) may be a better avenue for these appointments to help the Moderator identify and recruit more diverse candidates. In addition, serving on the Advisory Committee is a very significant commitment and perhaps there should be some form of compensation/benefits to make it more manageable for a wider group of candidates. Compensation or benefits for members of other major boards should be explored as well.

In general, mentoring may be one approach to facilitate participation by newcomers to Town boards and may lead to improved retention rates.

We also identified the existing Civil Discourse Initiative as a possible mechanism for engaging a broader section of the community in discussions around DEI concerns.

Conclusions

To date, our focus has been more on the town government aspect than the workforce aspect. It is our observation that the operation of town government is not well understood by a significant proportion of town constituents, which is in itself a barrier to representation and participation. Advisory is very influential over the direction of the Town but is very obscure to most people. There is a need to educate people on what Advisory is, that a wide range of skills is desirable for Advisory, and how to become part of Advisory. It is important to increase knowledge about town government generally so that residents and others understand the decisions made and feel empowered to participate.

In addition, the structures of town government may not always be welcoming or seem welcoming to new members or receptive to/comfort with DEI goals. Discussions in Town Meeting have in the past taken a direction that was not respectful or inclusive and therefore less productive. One potential project is to develop community commitments that reflect DEI goals (see Vision and Mission Statement) and could be proposed to Town Meeting and other town bodies.

The Town should consider creating a recruitment advisory committee and other avenues to broaden recruitment efforts for positions on Town boards and committees. The Moderator may not be able to sufficiently consider DEI factors in addition to other factors in the interests of making timely appointments. A diverse panel of candidates may not always be known to the Moderator. Boards may be more attractive to more diverse candidates if a stipend or other compensation is involved and/or meetings can be attended remotely.

The town may need to work with partners such as the League of Women Voters for education, recruitment, and training. Outside consultants may be required for DEI related workshops such as systemic racism and implicit bias training for Town Meeting and other Town bodies.

Next Steps

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

- Organize a workshop in late January/early February to provide foundational awareness of the importance of DEI efforts and to support the proposal to Town Meeting
 - The workshop could focus on providing the historical foundation for systemic racism as context for understanding the proposed DEI Resolution and the need for an equity audit. The target audience is Town Meeting Members, along with an invitation to the broader community. Currently, we envision the League of Women Voters as a partner for the workshop.
 - Bring in a consultant to conduct the training - funding sources need to be identified.
- Explore ways to offer training and education to elected and appointed officials on language and respecting differences in the work of town government.
 - One proposed mechanism would be to offer a set of norms or community agreements/commitments similar to those used by the task force to the Moderator for Town Meeting Members and to chairs for use by various town boards to support inclusive and productive discussion.
- Continue to promote recruitment of more diverse board members.
 - Explore with the Moderator and others the formation of a group (e.g., appointments committee) to assist in identifying, recruiting, and mentoring more diverse board members. Raise awareness of town government and opportunities to serve in the broader community.
- Work with the League of Women Voters on making information and education accessible.

Proposed Structure Post-Task-Force Subcommittee

Melinda Arias-Voci, Amy Frigulietti, Ann-Mara Lanza, Odessa Sanchez, and Robin Tusino (withdrew June 2022, due to work conflicts)

Charge:

- **Review/research DEI initiatives in comparable municipalities**
- **Create and present comparative analysis of most impactful structure to move forward the Town of Wellesley DEI agenda**

This subcommittee was tasked with investigating and recommending a post-task-force structure for DEI efforts in Wellesley. The main question we were asked to address is whether a DEI director or a DEI committee would be the best structure for enabling Wellesley to make progress towards its DEI vision. We developed two objectives to accomplish our goal:

Objective 1: Learn from the experiences of other communities and organizations what works and what doesn't. What are the potential traps?

Objective 2: Map out the most effective committee structure, mandate, and responsibilities for Wellesley.

Subcommittee Work

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

To reach our objectives, our committee embarked on a comprehensive benchmarking process. We also met with a DEI leadership expert and held informal interviews with staff and residents of Wellesley.

Benchmarking: Our committee researched the DEI efforts of communities similar to Wellesley. We chose towns based on geographic proximity, as well as socioeconomic and racial demographics. We also specifically added communities involved in the MAPC REMAP initiative. We benchmarked the following communities: Newton, Concord, Arlington, Norwood, Framingham, Milton, Belmont, Weston, Needham, Brookline, Westwood, Sudbury, Dedham, Winchester, Wayland, Lexington, and Natick.

Through website research and interviews with key staff, we gathered data on current DEI leadership initiatives, specifically looking at committee structure and/or staff responsibilities. We gathered [data](#) on reporting structure, mission, and budgets.

The following table is a summary of the DEI structures of the benchmark communities.

Director Only	Committee Only	Both	Human Rights Statement Only
Newton	Concord	Arlington	Norwood
Framingham*	Milton	Belmont	Weston
	Needham	Brookline	Westwood
	Sudbury	Dedham	Winchester
	Wayland*	Lexington	
		Natick	

*DEI director position under consideration in Wayland and under review in Framingham

Through this research, we saw that each community has developed its own unique approach to DEI work.

Interview with DEI Leadership Expert: We met with [Lyle Kirtman](#), CEO & Senior Management Consultant, Future Management Systems, to discuss the challenges of integrating equity practices into municipal leadership. He shared his research on leadership, specifically in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Subsequently, we invited Mr. Kirtman to speak to the broader DEI Task Force. Mr. Kirtman presented a realistic look at lessons learned from his work across the United States. He explained that DEI progress is slow, that no community has yet “solved” their DEI challenges, and that expectations need to be set accordingly. His research uncovered that many DEI directors struggle due to lack of real support (financial or otherwise). Finally, Mr. Kirtman emphasized the importance of staff and community buy-in (particularly with individuals in leadership positions) as the most important key to success.

Informal Discussions with Staff and Residents: Members of the committee held informal discussions with various department heads, fellow volunteers, and other residents to get feedback on potential DEI structures and focus areas. These conversations helped inform the team and will be continued on a more formal basis in Phase II. Further, we reviewed the MAPC

Massachusetts Municipal DEI Coalition 2022 DEI Guide which provided a collection of lessons gathered by municipal DEI practitioners throughout the Commonwealth.

Conclusions

The sub-committee reached the following conclusions in Phase I. There are pros and cons to both DEI structures that are being used in our benchmark communities:

	DEI COMMITTEE	DEI DIRECTOR
PROS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased transparency means residents can keep up with discussions and notes More likely to have designated budget for trainings, speakers, and other services Members reflect diversity of community and more likely to have familiarity with needs of Wellesley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated staff member Measurable outcomes Consistency and follow up Accountable Support group/network expertise Internal partnerships
CONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being accountable to open meeting laws makes them less nimble towards problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town budget/funds Tends to be catch-all for all DEI work Less understanding of the community

- Each community has a DEI structure that is unique - no “perfect” model has been found so far. Our benchmark communities are at all different stages in their DEI journeys. Some started many years ago with a Human Rights Committee, while others just began their DEI work in the past several years. While some progress has been made over time, all the communities still struggle with diversity, equity, and inclusion work.
- Progress requires community buy-in and support. Changing the way a community looks, thinks, and acts is slow work. The best success comes from a process that builds on broad community support.
- Most communities have a hybrid of committee/staff. Some started with a committee and have added staff. Only two have moved forward solely with DEI staff.

Overall, we've concluded that **we need to develop a DEI structure that is unique to Wellesley**, most likely a hybrid of DEI staff and volunteers, as has been successful with other Wellesley initiatives, such as Climate Action. The Climate Action Committee (originally the Sustainable Energy Committee) started as a Town Meeting initiated effort. Over ten years, the Town added staff and the Sustainability Director now reports directly to the Executive Director. This committee and director have had many successes, including developing ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines, and a Climate Action Plan for the town. While ten years might seem too slow for DEI work, our research shows that it most likely impossible to accomplish real change more quickly.

To develop a specific proposal for Wellesley, we need to learn more about how our community works, gauge commitment, and better understand the focus of our DEI efforts. Therefore, we

decided to hold off on Objective 2 until we can hold interviews and the proposed equity audit is complete.

Next Steps

- **Phased approach to implementation:**
 - Phase A: Town Government - Lead by example
 - Phase B: Community (Business/Realtors/Chamber, Faith Groups, Neighborhoods, PTOs, etc.)

Interviews with town boards/departments: In order to be able to recommend the most appropriate structure for Wellesley and ensure broad support, we need to determine level of buy-in and interest in participating in DEI efforts across town government. What structure would most engage boards and departments in the process? What support would they need to implement recommended DEI initiatives? We would like to interview each of the major boards and departments. Our subcommittee has drafted possible [questions](#) for these interviews.

- **Incorporate results of equity audit.**
- **Develop recommendation for the structure of future DEI work.**

Community Outreach & Engagement Subcommittee

Tony Clark, Stephanie Hawkinson, Glen Kim, Lisa MacDonald, Paul Merry, Donna Stoddard

Charge:

- **Engage with all committees to ensure input, outreach, and engagement with the varied constituencies of the Town of Wellesley**
- **Brainstorm methods of outreach, programming, and community partnerships**

Subcommittee Work

Since the subcommittee's formation in March 2022, members have repeatedly met and discussed steps to fulfill the two main elements of the charge. The second element ("Brainstorm methods of outreach...") proved to be the majority of our discussions and work. Our chair did meet with the other subcommittee chairs in hopes of partnership and keeping communication open, though it appears this portion of the charge will come later in Phase II as we make concrete plans to put forth these ideas surrounding outreach.

In the subcommittee's initial meetings, we discussed that is imperative that all task force members are able to share with constituents the following: *What is the task force doing and why is the work of the task force important?* This subcommittee then brainstormed ways to engage with residents. Our first idea was to develop a calendar of scheduled events and opportunities for task force members to speak with community members about the task force and DEI work (i.e. community clean-up day, July Jubilation, etc.). This objective was posited as an action-oriented goal that would also offer residents an opportunity to share their own questions, concerns, and hopes.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

The subcommittee feels strongly that it will be important for all task force members (those doing the work in Phase II) to solicit community input in order to carry out the mission of the task force. The following are some potential next steps for community engagement in the next phase:

- Schedule open meetings or hearings: Choose a series of evenings or other times when people will be able to speak with task force members in person, perhaps at Town Hall, the Library, etc.
- Issue announcements about the dates and locations for task force meetings and objectives. These could be posted on the town website, distributed by social media, issued in any available media outlets, and posted in public locations (Library, Town Hall, etc.).
- Identify task force members to serve as “ambassadors” to other groups in town to gather feedback. Groups could include the Italian-American club, civic groups like the Wellesley Club, World of Wellesley, and possibly service groups like Rotary, etc.
- Consult with the Charles River Chamber of Commerce to engage local businesses, and reach out to educational institutions like Babson, Dana Hall, and Wellesley College to inform them about the work and partner.

As we move into Phase II, the subcommittee proposes that task force members review these action items to help develop a plan for implementation. Community engagement is a critical piece of the work of the task force and should not become overly complicated. We feel strongly that such engagement should be pursued regardless of any uncertainty as to how the community will receive the information.

Our subcommittee also discussed, at length, some of the challenges that some groups within the community have experienced, including but not limited to unconscious and explicit bias, prejudice, discrimination, and retaliation. Some residents may have concerns about recounting these challenges due to experiences at both an individual and collective level. Consequently, the task force may not be able to gather a full picture as we move forward. These potential limitations should not prohibit us from carrying out the work but rather, demand that we continue discussing and identifying alternatives and remedies.

Overall, our subcommittee looks forward to the next phase of this work and engaging the full task force to provide input and more importantly, to identify concrete steps to take this work from brainstorming and discussion to action.

Equity Audit Subcommittee

Lina Musayev, Linda Chow, Ann-Mara Lanza, Donna Stoddard

Charge:

- **Create a definition of an equity audit**
- **Propose recommended scope of equity audit for Wellesley**

Subcommittee Work

This subcommittee was tasked with investigating equity audits used in other communities and leading the larger task force in a discussion of proposed equity audit scope. To accomplish this,

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

we reviewed DEI work in Arlington, Framingham, and Brookline. We also interviewed Bird Guess, a DEI consultant who leads communities through equity audits.

An equity audit is an assessment and leadership tool used for the following purposes:

- To demonstrate the commitment to equity in an organization or municipality
- To help the community understand current conditions and deficits
- To establish a baseline for measuring progress on DEI initiatives
- To create a foundation for future initiatives.

The scope of an equity audit can be broad or targeted, and internal or external. An **internal audit** evaluates policies, programs, and practices within town government that directly or indirectly impact staff, volunteers, and the community. An **external audit** measures community feelings of belonging and perceptions of bias.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Based on our research, and a full discussion with the task force, we recommend the following scope for Wellesley's proposed equity audit:

- A broad equity audit rather than targeted racial equity audit which looks at all aspects of equity: race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, color, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or other socio-culturally significant factors. This scope will provide a baseline for all future equity work in Wellesley, as well as build understanding and support in the community.
- Include both an internal audit and external climate assessment, so we get a complete snapshot of Wellesley today.
- The work on the audit should be coordinated with DEI work in Wellesley Public Schools so that we build on the work they have already done and avoid duplication.

The equity audit should include the following:

- Evaluation of services and programs available to all community members to determine barriers to access and to identify areas where inequities exist
- Evaluation of municipal documents, policies, practices, and procedures that impact employees and volunteers in town government
- Community climate assessment to evaluate the town's inclusivity, equitability, and diversity based on feedback from all who identify as community members, including town leaders, employees, residents, and business owners
- Provide recommendations and cost estimates for initiatives to increase equity in Wellesley.

We estimate that this work could cost between \$100,000 and \$150,000. This significant investment will provide an essential foundation for the necessary work ahead to fulfill Wellesley's ambition to be a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

In recent years, local governments have reflected on their cultures and practices and struggled with how and where to begin incorporating DEI values into their organization. Wellesley is no different and we are aware that we have only just begun in our determined effort to make change.

Wellesley has a community-based, highly decentralized town government that necessitates collaboration across departments, boards, committees, and constituencies. In that context, DEI work is truly a shared responsibility that must cut across every level. The Wellesley DEI Task Force looks forward to working with town stakeholders to identify, acknowledge, address, and overcome barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Understanding these barriers is a necessary first step to creating spaces of belonging that work for everyone, and will help guide the integration of DEI as a core function of government and make Wellesley a more welcoming community to all.

As we conclude Phase I and move into Phase II, the task force would like to thank the Select Board for encouraging the staff to dedicate time and resources to this ongoing initiative. We appreciate the opportunity to push toward structural and sustainable change in Wellesley, and ask for everyone's help in recognizing the Town's role and responsibility in remedying oppressive and exclusive systems, policies, and practices that contribute to systemic racism.

For more information on Wellesley's DEI Task Force, please visit:
<https://www.wellesleyma.gov/1690/Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion-in-Welles>.

DEI Task Force Resolution Language

Sponsor: DEI Task Force

Article 17: Anti-Racism and Anti-Bias Resolution

Resolution to the Wellesley MA - Spring 2023 Annual Town Meeting Town Warrant

WHEREAS the United States of America, of which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town of Wellesley are part, was founded upon the self-evident truths that all humans are created equal, and endowed by their creator with inalienable rights; and

WHEREAS the United States of America, including Massachusetts and the Town of Wellesley, have made great strides in treating its citizens equally and respectfully upholding undeniable rights; and

WHEREAS history has shown that despite its clear foundational principles and progress, the United States, including Massachusetts and the Town of Wellesley, have, at the same time, perpetuated unequal treatment of people due to their race, skin color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, sex, gender, gender identity/expression, class, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, disability; and

WHEREAS the racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, class and disability disparities which persist across a broad spectrum of social measures, including wealth, health, education, housing, and public safety are detrimental to all members of a community; and

WHEREAS the people of the Town of Wellesley repudiate discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as race, skin color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, sex, gender, gender identity/expression, class, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, disability, or any other factors; and

WHEREAS the Town's 2019 Unified Plan names diversity as a key value in the Town and recommends that the Town “[e]stablish, implement and support ongoing initiatives to maintain Wellesley as a community that welcomes a diversity of people and households”; and

WHEREAS the Wellesley Select Board has issued a Statement on Anti-Racism and Anti-Bias and the Wellesley School Committee has issued an Anti-Racism Resolution;

WHEREAS the people of the Town of Wellesley reaffirm their commitment to ensure that all people in Wellesley will receive and can expect to receive fair and equitable treatment from the Town's government, institutions and community members, by working to dismantle discrimination and bias and improve and make available opportunities to everyone;

Wellesley DEI Task Force Phase I Report

NOW THEREFORE be it RESOLVED and AFFIRMED, that the Town of Wellesley, acting by its Annual Town Meeting duly assembled, endorses and adopts the following statement for the guidance of all affiliated with its government in any capacity, as well as supports the baseline work to move forward with these commitments:

- We commit to working with our constituents, institutions, organizations, businesses, employees, and stakeholders to create a more welcoming and more inclusive Town of Wellesley.
- We commit to improving representation, participation, and opportunities available to people of color and other underrepresented groups, as well as to dismantling institutional racism and bias.
- As a Town, we will respond to stop intolerance or hate based on race, skin color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, sex, gender, gender identity/expression, class, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, disability, or any other like characteristic.
- We will acknowledge, address, and repudiate any and all expressions of hate, prejudice, and discrimination, including all forms and expressions of exclusion, bigotry, intolerance, and bullying toward any individual or group.
- We will also work to transform institutions, policies, procedures, and the workforce to reflect and honor the diversity of the community.

In order to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are keystone practices within Town operations and the community as a whole, Town Meeting will support the DEI Task Force with \$100,000.00 to hire a consulting firm to conduct an Equity Audit for the Town of Wellesley. The Audit will develop a baseline to assess whether and how institutional racism and unconscious bias influence the policies and practices of the Town of Wellesley and then in collaboration with residents and stakeholders inside and outside of Town government develop a framework for equity to guide the Town's policies and practices going forward. Informed by the Audit and inspired by the framework for equity, departments, boards, and committees will develop plans to operationalize the changes necessary to meet the goals of an equitable Wellesley. As part of the Audit, the DEI Task Force will assist the consultant in data collection and participate in interviews of staff and other stakeholders and in other ways as needed.

Example Equity Audits:

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/a4/92/a492f9bfddacc3b271a07f42c7c97485/racial-equity-audit-report.pdf>

<https://www.beverlyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2891/Beverly-Racial-Equity-Audit-Report?bidId=>