



Council Worksession
June 27, 2023
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle
Councilmember Pam Axberg

Absent: Councilmember Graeme Allen
Councilmember Emily Dunsworth

Staff in Attendance: Jen Lehmann, Hue Schlieu

Guests in Attendance: Kisten Thompson

DEI Update

Lehmann stated one of the many tangibles that resulted from the work initiated by the Inclusive Community Task Force was the hiring of a DEI Coordinator. The DEI Coordinator's role is to coordinate the City's equity efforts to ensure the achievement of New Brighton's Equity Statement. Hue Schlieu started as the DEI Coordinator with the City of New Brighton on January 30, 2023. Within the last five months, DEI Coordinator Schlieu has built relationships both internally and externally, led and supported community engagement events, and made strides on the Equity Strategic Action Plan (ESAP).

Schlieu introduced herself to the Council and described how she approached DEI. She reviewed the areas in the community she was working to make connections. She discussed the equity training series that was provided by consultants (Leer Coaching) for City staff. She discussed the community Iftar dinner that was hosted by the City stating over 100 people attended this event. She commented on the work being done to address racial covenants by the Just Deeds Coalition. She explained the City had yard signs available that state Inclusion Matters. She noted the City hosted a successful concert on June 8 at Veterans Park for Juneteenth. She reviewed the DEI resources available on the City's website, which included the City's equity statement and a guide to making equitable decisions. She reviewed her accomplishments to date and provided an update on the ESAP and Equity Commission Work Plan. The data collection, policy development and oversight work being done was further discussed. Preliminary additions to the ESAP would include curating resources and facts to share in ongoing staff communication, promoting gender pronouns in email signatures, composing a land acknowledgement with ESAT and the Equity Commission and updating the DEI website to inform residents of current progress. She explained it has been an honor to work for the City of New Brighton and she thoroughly enjoyed the work she does.

Councilmember Axberg asked if the City's website complies with standards for those with disabilities. Schlieu reported this was the case noting the City worked with Civic, which had built in technology to assure compliance.

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Councilmember Abdulle thanked DEI Coordinator Schlieu for doing important work on behalf of the community and for working with Just Deeds. He believed this was a good first step that would lead towards healing. He commended staff on their efforts and encouraged staff to continue to gather data from the public going forward.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas requested the work on the website have a list of items completed or DEI accomplishments for the Council to review. Schlieu stated she provide this information to the Council. Lehmann anticipated this would also be addressed comprehensively within the annual report.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked DEI Coordinator Schlieu for the great work she was doing on behalf of the City of New Brighton.

Worksession adjourned at 5:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Spangrud
City Clerk

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