

**Berkeley Heights (BH) TRHT Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**July 20, 2020, 7 PM**

**Members Present:**

Angie Devanney - Berkeley Heights Mayor  
John DiPasquale – Berkeley Heights Police Chief  
Jason Massimino – Berkeley Heights Community Policing  
Jeanne Kingsley - Berkeley Heights Township Council  
Stephen Yellin - Berkeley Heights Township Council  
Christine Reilly - Berkeley Heights Board of Education (BOE)  
Scott McKinney - Berkeley Heights Asst Superintendent of Schools  
Brandon Ramos – Berkeley Heights Town Resident  
Alexis Jenkins – Berkeley Heights Town Resident  
Vani Chitturi – Berkeley Heights Town Resident  
Dennis Kim – Berkeley Heights Town Resident  
Tiffany Escott - Berkeley Heights YMCA

**Apologies:** Father Andy Prachar – Little Flower

**Meeting Location:** Zoom call

Angie Devanney opened meeting w/ welcome and asked attendees noted above to share brief introduction about themselves to rest of committee.

1. Election of officers
  - a. Chair
  - b. Vice Chair
  - c. Secretary

Angie Devanney called for volunteers for Committee Officers.

Dennis Kim volunteered for the role of Committee Secretary.

Alexis Jenkins volunteered for the role of Committee Vice Chair.

Brandon Ramos asked about the role of Committee Chair and after the discussion accepted the role as Committee Chair.

2. Mission Statement (Vani Chitturi)

Angie Devanney ask Vani Chitturi from previous meeting to draft Committee Mission Statement and Vani Chitturi provide current point of view on the potential short- and long-term goals: Address gaps within Berkeley Heights (BH). One goal mentioned was to bring all stakeholders together (BOE; YMCA; Police Dept.; Town Council; Residents) to learn & to share the future programs with the need to listen to issues and concerns. Stephen Yellin volunteered to work w/ Vani Chitturi on further development of the mission statement.

Dennis Kim discuss the potential to look at the various diversity & inclusion programs with the YMCA; BOE; Berkeley Heights (BH); BH Police Dept.; Religious organization to identify potential gaps as well as have a summary of current & future programs/efforts.

Brand Ramos highlighted a method to create a table of needs vs efforts to summarize & identify gaps.

Vani Chitturi discussed 4 pillars – 1) police/programs; 2) Transparency/communication; 3) Citizen awareness & 4) Youth programs.

Christine Reilly raised question on current status of BH Diversity Council & how this committee would interact. Stephen Yellin & Jeanne Kingsley summarized a recent meeting that BH Diversity council and that they will operate independently and Committee discussed that moving forward that TRHT Committee will inform/collaborate & will invite an attendee from the BH Diversity Council as well as share agenda & minutes.

Additional discussion focused on expanding TRHT Committee to have representatives from the LBGTQ+ community as well as a resident with visible/non-visible disabilities & member of student population – College age/18+. Committee needs to forward potential candidates to Angie Devanney. Once selected/identified Angie Devanney to update executive order.

### 3. Goals

#### a. Short term

- i. Sustainable New Jersey- Diversity Profile
- ii. Community Policing/ BHPD FAQ Sheet
- iii. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Angie Devanney opened discussion on short term goals. Discussed Sustainable New Jersey and potential to elevate BH's Diversity Profile based on scorecards system (+10 points); Deadline is July 2021. Angie Devanney to share requirements/link as improvement in BH standing would carry benefits in grant review/qualification.

Stephen Yellin introduced potential to review & to connect with other towns to discuss their experience in diversity/inclusion programs and how did they implement these programs. Summit was mentioned as an example.

Angie Devanney & John DiPasquale & Jason Massimino discussed need of additional education of residents on Community policing. This is some current activities w/ BH Diversity Council. One hurdle discussed easy access of information once shared as there is only handful of residents attending listening session. There are frequently asked questions (FAQs) at listening session that need to be shared. One challenge highlighted is the depth and challenging nature of questions. Also, School police offices and juvenile laws were another issue that was discussed.

Christine Reilly highlighted similar experience at School Board meetings – few attendees with single/self-focused agenda and with low attendance at school board meetings the need to receive candid feedback is challenging.

Committee discussed information sharing – what programs are going on and identify what is the gap in communication/information sharing. Angie Devanney emphasized focus could be on improved effectiveness on communication & consistent message across BH; School system/District/BOE etc.

b. Long term

- i. Creating an inclusive welcoming community
  1. Recreation Concert series
- ii. Diversity in the workplace/public offices/ business community
- iii. Marketing the community as welcoming and inclusive to new home buyers
  1. Potential of nearly 1,000 new residential units will be built in next 24 + months
- iv. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Alexis Jenkins discussed experience and need to help new resident to get connected & showcase inclusion. Discussion BH Facebook page and content. Alexis Jenkins discussed potential goal to build a sustainable means to communicate/share information for the future.

Angie Devanney discussed South Orange initiatives and how the South Orange communicates/markets town for inclusion. Angie Devanney to share link/webpage to committee.

Stephen Yellin introduced Eyes on the Prize YouTube channel that focuses on social issues/civil rights. Stephen Yellin to share link w/ committee.

4. BHPD Update

- a. Blue Line Update
- b. Community Policing logo contest (or other ideas)

Angie Devanney & John DiPasquale provided update that blue line was painted over and as expected negative comments/emails/FB posts were received. Committee commended communication on this topic and that further education/support needed. John DiPasquale discussed changes mandated from New Jersey Government for Police Dept. Officers will be licensed; certain hiring standards will be updated from State and BH Police Dept will keep up with conducting internal reviews/assessments as well.

Based on the discussion on FB, idea was raised to have community to provide support/fundraising for break room/exercise equipment in new Townhall building. Police

Community logo contest was briefly discussed – potential to extend to BH Police Youth Academy and BH Schools.

#### 5. Board of Ed Update

Christine Reilly and Scott McKinney discussed rebranding of BH Public Schools 'Slogan' of 'Include, Inspire, Empower.' Diversity committee for each of the school buildings (Governor Livingston HS; Columbia MS; Elementary schools (Hughes; Woodruff; Mountain Park) with students; parents; administration & teachers & Dr. Varley. This forum would communicate & plan events & connect w/ Diversity Committee.

BOE will also be developing best practice for hiring as well as provide professional training w/ Staff & Administration. Other activities include reviewing current education curriculum. BOE hired new K-5<sup>th</sup> grade director for curriculum development and will review curriculum with respect to diversity as a focus.

Highlighted work in preparation for July 30<sup>th</sup> Board meeting on sharing how schools would open and importance to have students back in classrooms.

#### 6. Faith Community Update

Not discussed at this meeting.

#### 7. YMCA Update

Tiffany Escott shared that YMCA Diversity council met. Discussed revisiting education/orientation of new & current employees. Highlighted BH YMCA Pool is opened and looking to discuss with Dr. Varley on YMCA childcare programs once students go back to school.

#### 8. Next Meeting, August 17, 2020, 7 PM

Angie Devanney discussed that 7pm seemed opened for everyone and that next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Angie Devanney closed meeting at 8:12pm.

Actions/Next Steps from July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Meeting:

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who (Leads + Others)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Further development of TRHT Committee Mission Statement	Vani Chitturi & Stephen Yellin	By Aug 17 <sup>th</sup>
Send Nomination of additional TRHT Committee members representing LGBTQ+; Visible/non-Visible Disabilities & college age/18+ residents to Angie Devanney.	Committee	ASAP
Share Sustainable New Jersey information and section/application on towns Diversity Profile	Angie Devanney	By Aug 17 <sup>th</sup>
Explore potential to connect with other towns to discussion diversity/inclusion programs	Stephen Yellin	TBC
Review South Orange initiatives via web link on marketing town to new potential residents	Angie Devanney	Before Aug 17 <sup>th</sup>
Share Eyes on the Prize YouTube channel/episode? That focuses on social issues/civil rights	Stephen Yellin	Before Aug 17 <sup>th</sup>
Invite BH Diversity council to next & future TRHT Committee meetings & share minutes	Angie Devanney/Brandon Ramos?/Dennis Kim?	ASAP
Zoom call link to committee	Angie Devanney/Barbara Russo?	By Aug 17 <sup>th</sup> – 6:45pm
Agenda for Aug 17 <sup>th</sup> Meeting to committee	Brandon Ramos/Angie Devanney/Dennis Kim/Alexis Jenkins	On Week of Aug 10 <sup>th</sup>