

Minutes from 013123

Kathy had been tasked with reaching out with Steve and Dwight for the Assumption church and the Fire Dept (his son is the chief). Fire Dept didn't understand why they were reaching out to them. Kathy followed up about why a discussion would be interesting to them. Can talk about the numbers later.

Ben: to quickly recap for those who weren't there last week: did our best to sketch out where all the people in town gather where there is enough trust to be able to have hard conversations, as opposed to a townwide place. Goal to find the middle. Make room for conversations that we haven't yet had. Kathy said that was challenging message.

Lou and Jim: questions: Lou said yes, but he wants to find out what he'd be saying. Would he be talking to the staff? Ben: people who built trust about that facility. Tom: who do you know whom you've had a relationship with; small, informal. Lew: not up on a poster, then.

Elaine: (Ben: you last time you said it's useful to talk in small groups where there's trust. So he'd say that putting up a sign is the right thing OK but by invitation only makes sense. Elaine: I've made my connection with Bnai Jacob, head of Social Justice Committee, who said they can't take on hot political issues. But she did say that she can email a list of individuals who might be interested in participating.

Lew: Temple Emmanuel in Orange has more members from Woodbridge than from any other town. Ben thinks we don't have to limit it to congregants from Woodbridge. Names a couple of people from CONNECT who are members (Matt McDermott and Alana...). Kathy says they would be great...Alana is Open Communities Alliance.

Ben's impulse is absolutely to invite them in, but as this is a town community there may be liability issues. Defers to us on this.

Ben says the goal is to involve people who have not felt that they have had a voice.

Ben says to Elaine that he wants to expand on the Social Justice Committee situation...want to reach people not as ideologues but as neighbors. Community first, find common ground, act on that.

Elaine: re small neighborhood meetings. Three people on the same road (Lew and Steve). What about a small neighborhood meeting? Back on March 4: what is our timeline? Ben thinks that planning something in future. Elaine to organize. Ben: how to frame? In Milford, shared stories about people they knew who had difficulties finding a place to live.

Mary:

Ben: These are the details we are working out together. In terms of facilitating meetings, Ben can't be doing all the meetings; Should start doing facilitation tips etc. Also available to consult about specific groups or issues by phone. Training and coaching. These initial ones, where there is trust built, is different. when we are bringing other groups together where

Don't need a common script because we're not doing a survey; we're looking for allies. What works best at Trinity may not work best elsewhere. We want to be united in common purpose, and intentional in approach.

Ben addresses the question about how to ask people the questions. The person who is inside the different groups will know how best to address each of them.

What I said about being heard

Steve Lawrence: DEI, BOS, other groups: Getting to those good questions to stimulate discussion. How get a conversation going and that exchange...doing it with groups which which you're familiar. Possible for other groups with whom the group has worked to host. Question: to what end are we aspiring. ..questions whether the BOE would be appropriate as a sponsor of the conversation, but the DEI is.

Ben asks if the housing committee wants to address the question, "to what end?" Kathy: education about what Affordable housing is and is not, and the advantages that will accrue to the town. People in town are burdened; others who need housing; people are struggling. Need for housing options in town. We need to take ownership of the problems and address them as a town, region, state.

Steve: how does it start with their understanding of their experience of the situation? People on the committee will have ready answers and perspectives, but if the DEI committee does it...conscious raising? Value in just getting knowledge out into the community. But what is the action step we want, if anything.

Ben: figuring out where we go and build it together. Like you said, when people show up with information sessions with an open mind...we want to meet people where they're at...want initial sessions to be about what people's experiences are...Education (what's going on, people's lives; options) and as part of that, Solution that works for everybody.

Expectation of the first meetings is to get a sense of people's experiences and wants. From there, next steps, do we want to meet again and who wasn't here' who needs to be there. Also, if there are specific policy questions, get the answers, and #3, building toward townwide meetings, with a much broader base of people and informed by a much wider understanding of people's wants, etc.

Steve: likes the idea of being additional people,

All come to the table with knowledge and expertise and also blind spots.

Ben asks to schedule a 2 hour story circle. That could be a useful thing; a useful baseline for getting at people's experiences and allow people to listen to each of each other, without professional facilitation experience. 1 hour of the circle.

Feb 15 7 p.m.