

Report from the Community Outreach Subcommittee

For the 11/4/21 Taskforce Meeting on Safety and Equity

Based on suggestions from the Purpose Subcommittee report and discussions from the 10/21/21 Taskforce meeting, Lauren, Margae and Gail did some independent work which they shared at a 10/29/21 Zoom meeting.

At this meeting we discussed and agreed that our charge from the Task Force is to present a plan to reach out to the wider community of marginalized citizens for inclusion in recommending a “purpose statement” for a Community Safety and Equity Board to the Bennington Select Board.

We conducted a brief google search on how to elicit input from the community, specific to the topic, with limited success. We reviewed a “Community Café” document and decided that this format would be too time consuming with consideration of getting input before we complete work on a “purpose” statement. Concern was also addressed about the formality of the “café” approach with at-risk persons. However, an invite by an organization to attend a group meeting of volunteer interviewees may be a consideration, in place of 1:1 interviews.

Who to Interview: We discussed a list of organizations, with the intent of including members of Bennington’s marginalized citizens. This list and some names of contact persons have been attached for the review of the Taskforce; some assistance from Stu may be required for additional contacts.

With the help of the organization leadership, interviews would be arranged with volunteer service users of the organization; all volunteer interviewees would remain confidential. We discussed including demographic information from the interviewee, but decided that might be intimidating.

What to ask: We went back to the charge of the Select Board to the Taskforce and agreed that open-ended questions related to the areas cited in the charge might be the best way to maintain focus on the purpose statement. Suggestions are attached for the Taskforce’s review.

How to get it done in a timely manner: We suggest that each Taskforce member identify an organization or two to contact; attempt to complete at least 5

interviews. Document the organization and the information obtained from the interviewee. Document refusals/inability to obtain volunteer participants. Because this activity will drive completion of the purpose statement, we suggest completing Taskforce volunteer assignments on 11/4; completion of the interviews and/or refusals to be reported out on 11/18/21 so that we can assure consideration of our interviewee input is included as we move forward with completing our statement of purpose.

See Attachments

Suggested Interview Questions

Organization/Contact List