

NEW ALBANY

IDEA Meeting – January 14, 2021

All participants present via Zoom Webinar

IDEA Committee Leaders: Dr. Lisa White, Mayor Spalding, Council Member Brisk

IDEA City Representatives: Vida Farwana, Mohit Gupta, Abe Jacob, Shohba Painter, Anita Patel, Tiana Samuels, LaVerne Fudge-Williamson, Ofra Eliav Greenshtein

IDEA Stakeholder Representatives: Ben Collins, Nicole Dempsey, Kimberly Lee Minor, Benjamin Reid, Renee Shumate, Jennie Wilson, Paul Naumoff (arrived 5 pm)

Public: Council Member Matt Shull, Chris Christian, Courtnee Carrigan

City Staff: City Manager Joseph Stefanov, Administrative Services Director Adrienne Joly, Clerk of Council Jennifer Mason

Welcome

Meeting started at: 4:04 pm

Mayor Spalding opened the meeting with remarks. After a brief welcome and introduction. Dr. White invited the IDEA committee members Laverne Fudge-Williamson and Ofra Eliav Greenshtein who were not able to be at the last meeting to say a few words.

We reviewed the statement of purpose in order to fine tune it and define our group objectives. The general consensus was that the statement of purpose needed to be broad enough not to be constrictive. The statements were aspirational so that we could achieve outlined goals. We agree to change some of the language for example instead of “make” change this to “create a welcoming community for all residents.” Dr. White welcomed their input and agreed to summarize the changes for the next meeting.

The next item on the agenda was to define diversity, inclusion, and equity for the purposes of the committee. There was great discussion around how diversity is creating space for not just different races, but also differing perspectives, variety of backgrounds, and religions. This helps us to celebrate the uniqueness of the community. Diversity is a fact, but inclusion is an act. In order to achieve inclusion there is the act of learning about one another and inviting others to participate. In this sense, diversity and inclusion becomes an equitable action. Equity is achieved when residents are provided equal opportunities. It also means that everyone receives the same resources, rewards, and benefits. In the interest of time, the definitions will be composed by Dr. White from the discussion and presented for adoption at the next meeting.

The diversity section of the New Albany 2020 Community Attitudes Survey was next on the agenda. Dr. White informed the group that she would highlight elements of the survey briefly,

and that she wanted them all to continue thinking about their definitions of diversity, inclusion, and equity that we just discussed. In summary, the survey revealed that about half of residents agree that New Albany is diverse with 18% strongly disagreeing that it is diverse. There were significant differences in the amount of residents who felt that New Albany was welcoming of different sexual orientations, races, political beliefs, and levels of income. Strikingly, only 36% of African-Americans felt that New Albany was a welcoming community. Subsequent slides provided some suggestions for improving the cultural climate, but some residents indicated that they did not feel change was necessary or needed. Some committee members requested some more specific data on provide the breakdown of the demographics of those who did not feel change was needed which will be provided to them.

We broke into smaller groups to discuss the answers to two questions:

- Using the agreed upon definitions of diversity, inclusion, and equity what are some strategies for resolving gaps in the survey?
- How would you achieve equity within your respective organizations and/or the community as a whole?

The discussions from each group yielded the following strategies:

Group 1-Create social media messages and graphics that reflect the diversity of New Albany. Food, music festivals, book clubs, and movie time with representation from different cultures. Adopt new residents into the community by pairing them with another family that can welcome them and answer any questions.

Group 2-The New Albany survey currently could be improved to do a deeper dive capturing data from more specific cultural groups (i.e. African is not the same as African-American). This would allow for better impact mapping. Focus groups or community conversations that provide opportunity to talk about and process civil discourse. Provide resources for minority owned businesses to thrive and prosper.

Group 3-Provide resources for new residents so that when they move to the area they are connected with a welcome packet with information about events and where to go for assistance or resources. Build excitement around arts and culture events held at Hinson Amphitheatre. Provide public education through engaging speakers. Increase recruitment efforts to New Albany boards and commissions so that they are representative of the community.

Group 4-Create a speaker series of multi-cultural speakers on a variety of topics and interests. Encourage diverse vendors and foods to be offered at the Farmers Market and Taste of New Albany. Develop a welcome packet with resources and events for new residents along with an updated page on the city's website.

Dr. White asked if the meeting could be extended to allow for each group to give a report from their spokesperson. The goal for the next meeting will be to formally adopt the purpose and definitions. We will also prioritize the list of strategies and identify action items toward deliverable goals.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 P.M.