

Diversity Equity Inclusion Advisory Board DRAFT Action Plan
(July 17, 2020 DRAFT)

1. Seek applicants for Founding Advisory Board (July)
 - A. 7-9 Residents, 1-2 Trustees, 1-3 Staff

I do not think the staff needs to be part of the Advisory Board. They already have a job to do for the city. I believe Trustee Loflin should be the Trustee attached to the advisory Board.

2. Board of Trustees appoint Founding Advisory Board Members (September) ← August
3. Founding Advisory Board Formation (September)
 - A. Board Member "On-boarding"
 - i. Orientation on State and Town policies (Open Meetings, meeting agenda process, IT Protocol, etc.)
 - ii. Time commitment (Board Members to decide)
 - iii. Build familiarity with Town operations and staff
 - B. Board Members clarify WHAT they will be doing
 - i. Develop written documents clarifying
 - a. Purpose
 - b. Duties
 - c. Member Terms
 - ii. Identify initial focus areas and goals
 - a. Consultant/Facilitator RFP
 - b. Resident Survey?
 - c. Town Government (assessment on Equity/Inclusion continuum and recommended actions—see "Equity/Inclusion Continuum" handout)?
 - d. Human Resources (equity in hiring, compensation and other matters)?
 - e. Cultural Activities?
 - f. Housing (affordability, equal access, and other issues)?
 - g. Business access?
 - h. Language access?
 - i. Voting access?
 - j. Community Policing (issues in addition to and broader than the focus of the Police Directives Community Task Force is working on)?
 - k. Parks (how to make them welcoming to all)?
 - l. Education (in coordination with the School Districts)?
 - m. Other?
 - iii. Initial budget needed to complete work in 2020 and proposed budget for 2021

Jennifer Parenti:

3.B.ii. Preparation & Info Gathering (1-3 months)

3.B.ii.a Consultant/Facilitator RFP Development

3.B.ii.b Town Government organizational Self-Assessment

3.B.ii.c Resident Survey

3.B.ii.d Town Services Review

3.B.ii.e Categories for Residential Survey & Town Services Review:

Housing

Business Opportunities

Language Access

ADA Access

Voting

Security & Policing (liaising with CP Task Force)

Parks & Facilities

Recreational Programs (not the same as parks and should be separate)

Cultural Activities

Education (liaising with other efforts--see below)

Healthcare Access

Food Access & Security (e.g., lack of grocery stores in Old Town, adequacy of the food bank to meet Erie's needs, etc.)

3.B.iii Analysis (3-6 months)

3.B.iii.a Review of results of Resident Survey and Town Services Review by the Board (under the guidance of facilitator)

3.B.iv. Recommendations

3.B.iv.a Create specific recommendations to address any concerns identified as a result of the previous work and emerging issues

Current 3.B.II.I. Education - my recommendation is that the DEI Board allow community members to lead/guide work with the School Districts and individual schools. The Board should monitor progress with two primary purposes in mind: 1) to ensure consistent application across Erie public schools, and 2) to offer services and support to Erie private educational institutions if they choose to participate.

4. RFP for consultant/facilitator/Advisory Board liaison (September - October)
 - A. Steering committee conducts interviews
 - B. Steering committee makes recommendation to hire
 - C. Facilitator hired - can be available for up to 1 year to assist the group (this is a start but will not be left to volunteers to oversee the DEI of the Town).
 - D. Recommendation will be brought to BOT to vote on hiring
5. Community engagement (September and continuing)
 - A. Create a plan that clearly lays out the steps/timeline the Advisory Board and Town are taking.
 - B. Share steps and resources for residents interested in participating
 - i. FB group (not Town sponsored)
 - ii. Training ideas
 - iii. Purpose of Town's involvement
6. Resident survey (September - October)
 - A. Identify issues residents believe need to be focus areas for Town of Erie
 - B. Learn about what residents believe they can do and what Town can do
 - i. Helps not duplicate
 - C. Gather resources – who/what is available that we can use for Advisory Board, staff training, resident intention
 - D. Gather information in several formats – Bang the Table, Call in (for those without compute access/savvy, writing, neighborhood groups, translation, etc.)

Town Feedback:

Bridget Devitt Parker Hello, neighbors! I apologize for posting kind of late, but I wanted time to really sit down and give this my full attention.

I do support diversity and inclusion in the town of Erie. My understanding is that there are two ways to talk about “diversity and inclusion:”

- 1) The meaning of the words themselves: the presence of variety and difference within a group of people and the act of making sure everyone is welcomed, respected, and participating in a group.
- 2) A body that is in charge of making sure a group (like a town or a company) is adhering to certain predetermined standards of diversity and inclusion

What do I want from a D&I committee? I would like it to work towards true systemic change in Erie, especially to prepare the town for the future, since we’re growing so quickly. We need to implement anti-racist policies and practices for housing, education, and law enforcement; create an inviting community for all people (financially, culturally, educationally, socially, etc.); recognize that the wealth enjoyed by a large percentage of white suburban Erie residents has been made possible by generations of theft of Black lives, Black wealth, Indigenous land, and the criminally cheap labor of migrant workers (so I think reparations should be part of the discussion, maybe in the form of housing incentives for BIPOC).

If you don’t know about/agree with reparations, please read this:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/.../the-case-for.../361631/>

I think there are advantages and potential pitfalls to creating a committee that is under the umbrella of town governance.

Pros: The town government has the experience, the connections, and the power to enact real systemic change in our town.

Cons: I feel wary about how hindered this committee might be by procedures, bylaws, bureaucracy and arguments.


Also, creating this kind of committee could make folks who are not directly involved sit back and let others do the work of anti-racism for them. To remedy this, if the town does form a D&I committee, BBN should continue drawing people in who are not directly involved with town government and continue creating conversations and events and ways to keep us all connected and sharp.

I would be willing to help with fundraising. I have very little experience, but I can learn.

Lastly, we have to hold each other accountable, so YES. It sounds like the town leadership is willing to commit to this, and it also sounds like many townsfolk are too. I think this will be super messy and difficult, and lots of feathers will be ruffled and lots of honest and not-honest mistakes will be made. We have to expect that. We still have to keep going. This can’t be a phase or a fad. We have to be humble, learn from each other, and remember that we are all working to fight racism together.

Thanks, Mecca, for starting this conversation, and thanks, BBN people, for your good responses.

- [Rachel Balkcom](#) I appreciate a lot of what folks have said. The humanist approach is helpful for us to apply to ourselves (as Dr. Amanda Kemp discusses so beautifully), but we need radical systemic change as a society. We need truth and reconciliation, and reparations. We need white folks to educate each other with total humility and authentic desire to change, and we need POC in leadership, and I support efforts of the committee toward both of these goals.

[Shane Revoal](#)  I strongly support diversity and inclusion in Erie. I see a lot of great ideas from individuals who may know how to organize more than I, but I would love to get involved and learn.

As people have mentioned, we have to establish what we think diversity and inclusion should look like in this community: education, housing, jobs, etc. The curriculum in our schools needs to be updated, for sure.

Tell the history of black, brown, and indigenous people and their contributions to the area; not just in Erie but all of Boulder county. I have heard stories that Boulder once had a strong black and brown representation. What happened to those communities?

I would love to see the community celebrate one another: have a Juneteenth celebration, a Cinco De Mayo (more than stopping at the local Mexican restaurant for a margarita) celebration, and other cultural/ ethnic celebrations. Everyone loves a good party 😊 let's celebrate one another.

I understand the apprehension about getting community officials to take action, we know there will be some push back. For every movement, there is some hesitation in those first steps. Like John Lewis (may he rest in power) would say, LET'S GET INTO SOME GOOD TROUBLE!

[Anne Em](#) I absolutely support diversion and inclusivity. What this concept means to me: I think of social justice. That the white hetero patriarchal voice has always been in control. That the system has been set up to keep Black people enslaved for 400 years. Ava DuVernay's "13th" educated and woke me up on a deep, deep level.

I'm willing to fundraise, and I do think that the Town of Erie should be held accountable by this committee.

What I want to see happen is community growth. A greater understanding of how systems of oppression slyly operate in plain sight. I admittedly don't know what this looks like moving forward. But I can say that the Erie CO page regularly makes me feel ill. I don't know what to do with voices proclaiming freedom and patriotism as a front for racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia.... I can speak but I have learned that these voices won't listen, in Trump's America.

I'm guessing I'm not the only one who feels lost.

- [Laura Baumgartner](#) Yes, I support D(e?)I in Erie.

Diversity...technically just means having many types of people but not necessarily supporting each in the way they need, I prefer equity but I know DEI is a common term. Inclusion means that everyone has a sense of safety, respect, and belonging.

I would like the committee to investigate/hear what the town can do better to support/protect BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other underserved groups.

Yes, I would be willing to help fundraise.

Yes, there needs to be some accountability or at least public process or the committee will be optics only.

Olivia Parolari-Weststeyn Yes I support it. To me diversity is what makes us all unique because of our differences. Inclusion is making sure everyone feels supported and welcome. Nobody should feel unwelcome. I would love to see the town come together for events that celebrate our unique differences because that is what makes us learn and accept things that we may not otherwise get to be part of or witness. Yes I believe the committee should have the ability to hold the town accountable. We need to come together more and be louder about our acceptance of all. Maybe just maybe the silent majority can make this town better by not being so quiet anymore..

Laura Kirchoff Hopkins Yes, I support both! I understand diversity to be a community made up of people from all walks and colors of life (black, brown, white, lgbtq, etc), and inclusion to mean that everyone feels welcome and a part of the greater good.

Yes I would be willing to help - we are very limited to what we can do outside the house right now as we are a high risk household, but would love to find a way to be involved even if that just means contributing financially for now.

Yes, I believe they should have the ability to hold the town accountable.

Elizabeth Mendez-Shannon I support DEI efforts in Erie. In my professional life I work as an administrator in these efforts, and teach it as a professor. These terms are vital to my existence in that as a woman of color, systems were not made for me. Because of this, my existence is in itself an act of resistance.

I'd like to experience equity and representation as a result from this committee. I'd also like to hear the BOT members, the mayor and the police do their own DEI work by creating a strategic plan specific to DEI and Black Lives and White Supremacy.

Fundraising is one of my abilities though I also believe that the city of Erie should dedicate funds specific to these efforts with an eventual goal of hiring a chief diversity officer.

If this committee does not have the power to hold the town of Erie, the BOT, the Mayor and police accountable, then it's existence is for optics rather than action

Heather Ross Werner Yes, I support diversity & inclusion in Erie.

To me, diversity is looking around and seeing others that don't look like me. It's talking to others and hearing differing views & experiences. Inclusion is making sure all of these differences are represented with an equal seat at the table.

I would like to understand more about what we can do as a community to be more welcoming & accepting of diversity here in Erie. I want to understand why we are lacking in diversity and what we need to do to change this.

I would absolutely help fundraise.

I think a D&I committee must have a good working relationship with the town and if needed, hold the town accountable. It won't work without accountability.

[Schuyler Jay Trowbridge](#) Labor mandates and reparations but some of y'all ain't ready....

[Steve Nelson](#) I strongly support this work. Diversity and inclusion are about social justice and equity, not fun events. I watched the Trustee discussion and worried that "diversity" was drifting toward making Erie a multicultural community welcoming CU faculty from other places and having ethnic-themed lunches. That's dandy, but the focus must be on anti-racist work, addressed with strength and conviction. The problem in America - and in Erie - is not a lack of colorful difference among people of relative privilege. It is about systemic racism and suffocating injustice primarily affecting black and indigenous folks. I'd like to see real conversations about proactive integration of the community: more housing options, monitoring real estate activity, reaching outside Erie. I'd like to see the schools engage in anti-racist work, not just more accurate history classes. I believe such a committee must have the authority to hold the town accountable. Real diversity work has to be uncomfortable or it's not real diversity work. Yes, I'd be willing to help.

[Heather Shea](#) [Steve Nelson](#) I so agree on the housing issue. The Town needs to start by requiring these developers ensure there are real affordable home ownership opportunities. A start would be requiring all new developments get approved for FHA mortgages. Also the Town needs to get some Habitat development going NOW.

[Lynne Norder](#) All of this. I also agree with many of the other statements posted in this thread in general. My biggest concern is that this committee (or whatever it ends up being) is established in such a way that it cannot be undone by future mayors and trustees. ...[See More](#)

[Tara Cone](#) Yes, I support diversity and inclusion. To me, diversity is the celebration of what makes us unique whether that be skin color, ethnic background, religion, gender, ability, disability, gender preference, sexual preference, romantic preference, ECT. Inclusion is making each person feel supported and accepted for who they are. I would like to see the committee help put policies in place to support diversity and inclusion as well as offer programs and education in schools and the community to help understand the issues and how unintentional bias plays a role. I'm not in a place in life where I have time or energy to help arrange fundraising, but I'm happy to buy merchandise (thanks Haley!), eat out, pay to attend events, or make a donation to help with the cause. Yes I think the committee should be able to hold town officials and first responders accountable if their actions do not follow guidelines.

[Liz Fisher](#) Erie is a diverse community. Sometimes we have to take a stand and for many, the time is now. Acknowledging that racial injustice must stop, respecting our differences and creating tangible opportunities for inclusion all go hand in hand. Police oversight, workplace hiring practices, housing and schools are key focus areas. From my perspective, government and accountability are often contradictory terms. Advisory boards are just that -- they advise. A diversity & inclusion committee might be more effective acting independently rather than as a co-opted arm of the Town of Erie. Either way, I support the efforts of this group.

Mecca Scott  Liz Fisher great point