



TOWN OF ERIE

645 Holbrook Street
Erie, CO 80516

Town Council

Board Meeting Date: 7/14/2020

File #: 20-394, Version: 1

AGENDA CATEGORY: General Business

SUBJECT:

Follow-Up Discussion from June 11 Community Conversation and Discussion of Diversity Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, Youth Task Force, Police Department Directives Task Force, and Continuing the Community Conversation About Racial Justice

DEPARTMENT: Administration

PRESENTERS: Malcolm Fleming, Town Administrator

TIME ESTIMATE: 90 Minutes

FISCAL INFORMATION: N/A

Cost as Recommended:

Balance Available:

Budget Line Item Number:

New Appropriation Required:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the proposed Ordinance

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND OF SUBJECT MATTER:

In response to George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis and the resulting public outcry around the world for action to prevent similar injustices, on June 11th the Town hosted a virtual Community Conversation moderated by Town resident Justin Brooks. That Conversation provided an opportunity for Town residents to share their perspectives, questions and suggestions. The following Saturday, June 13th, over 400 people, including the entire Board of Trustees, Police Chief Stewart and Town Administrator Fleming participated in a Black Lives Matter/Together We Rise/Being Better Neighbors March organized by Justin Brooks and other community members. Then, during the Board of Trustees' June 16 Study Session, the Board discussed what actions the Town should take promote racial justice, diversity, equity and inclusion in Erie, to continue the Community Conversation, and to provide an example for other communities to emulate.

During the June 16 discussion, Board members expressed support for:

- Forming an Erie Police Department Directives (Policies) Task Force
- Exploring the creation of a Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Advisory Board
- Creating a Youth Task Force

- Identifying ways to keep the Community Conversation going

In response to the Board's support for these actions, staff explored these issues and in consultation with and the assistance of Justin Brooks, Mecca Scott, Trustee Loflin and others, staff has taken the following actions and recommends the following additional actions:

Police Directives Community Task Force

Police Chief Kim Stewart, working with Justin Brooks, Mecca Scott, Trustee Loflin, Human Resources Director Alicia Melendez, and other Town staff is organizing a Community Task Force of 9 Town residents to review the Erie Police Department's directives and protocols. The Department's written directives specify how employees must perform their duties in an acceptable, honorable, consistent and justifiable manner. The written directives can be viewed at this link: [Erie Police Department Written Directives <https://www.erieco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13154>](https://www.erieco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13154).

On June 26, the Town posted advertising seeking volunteers to serve on the Community Task Force. The posting asked interested individuals to submit applications of interest no later than July 10. As of July 8, the Town had received over 50 applications.

Starting the week of July 13, a selection panel composed of Director Melendez, Trustee Loflin and Mr. Brooks will review applications and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on appointments for consideration at the Board's July 28 meeting. The first Task Force meeting will be on Wednesday, July 29, at 7:00 pm at the Erie PD. The Task Force members will set the pace and determine which Directives or Procedures they wish to review and in what order. They will also decide as a group the best day(s)/time (s) to meet. Task force members will be asked to participate in the TI simulator (shoot - don't shoot) training held at the Boulder Sheriff's Office. Members will also be asked to participate in a 4 hour ride-along with an EPD officer (when COVID restrictions are lifted). The Task Force and/or staff will provide written updates to the Board as the work progresses, and the Task Force will present its findings and recommendations to the Board when the review is complete. Deputy Chief Mathis will be the Department liaison to the Task Force.

Town of Erie Youth Advisory Board

Board Members, community members and staff have proposed various approaches to organizing a Youth Advisory Board, Committee, or Task Force. The proposals include two key variants:

- A Formal Erie Youth Advisory Board organized following the Town's traditional approach (Board of Trustees approval of an Ordinance amending the Town Code to specify purpose, duties, and Advisory Board composition and terms; drafting, adopting and following By-Laws) and subject to applicable rules and regulations (the Colorado [Open Meetings Requirements <https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/open-meeting-requirements-of-the-colorado-sunshine->](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/open-meeting-requirements-of-the-colorado-sunshine-); properly noticed meetings with published agendas; no discussion among more than two members other than during noticed meetings; training on Town policies and procedures, such as Information Technology protocols; etc.).

If the Board desires to follow this approach, staff will draft an Ordinance for Board consideration, advertise for volunteers, designate an applicant review committee that will review applications and make recommendations to the Board for appointment to the Advisory Board.

- A Less Formal Erie Youth "Association". As noted above, a formal advisory board must

observe Open Meetings Requirements, publish meeting agendas, follow adopted by-laws, and observe other requirements. Those constraints will make it harder to get a formal Advisory Board up and running effectively, may discourage some people from participating, and could hinder effective youth engagement. Staff believes using a less formal approach would enable the Town to more easily get the group going at an operational (staff) level.

With minimal-but skilled and experienced-facilitation and mentoring from some key staff, it would be possible for the youth to create their own group norms / rules / operating expectations / goals. Staff has seen youth do all of that, often coming up with more creative and effective ideas than all the adults. Among the tasks they could tackle immediately is deciding their official group name, mission, and 2020 goals.

Additional Information: During the Board's June 16 study session, the Board asked for information on the Commerce City and Louisville youth advisory committees. Some information is available at these links:

- Commerce City Youth Commission <<https://www.c3gov.com/government/boards-commissions/youth-commission>>
- Louisville Youth Advisory Board <<https://www.louisvilleco.gov/government/boards-commissions/youth-advisory-board>>

Diversity Equity and Inclusion Advisory Board

Board Members, community members and staff have all proposed approaches to promoting racial justice and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Erie. As with engaging youth, there are two key variants:

Establish a DEI Advisory Board Now. In discussing this matter with staff (Malcolm Fleming) Town resident Mecca Scott suggested the Town should establish an Advisory Board and have that group focus on four primary areas:

1. Policy/Government - making sure policy and government reflect the 2% population as well
2. Education/Youth - age-appropriate team building/education/entertainment around cultural awareness and civics
3. Culture/Entertainment - bringing cultural events reflecting the different cultures represented in the community. Expanding vending/selling and business opportunities for Erie residents.
4. Community Policing - working with the community and law enforcement to ensure more of a community approach and less of an adversary approach. Making sure police receive anti-bias training and that any officer found guilty of bias, racism, or any form of misconduct get dealt with appropriately.

Ms Scott also recommends establishing a Director level position to oversee this work and (a) serve as a liaison between the public (mainly the minority population) and the government, (b) foster a climate of communication, problem solving and team building, (c) oversee cultural events, and (d) make sure police receive anti-bias training and any officer found guilty of bias, racism, or any form of misconduct is dealt with appropriately.

Facilitated Community Engagement. Staff with experience in working with advisory boards suggest, perhaps as a preparatory step to creating an Advisory Board, contracting with a skilled facilitator to

coordinate a community engagement (like the design charrette for Town Center). A facilitator could help the community and Board discuss and identify key goals and actions needed in Erie and develop a framework and action plan. Facilitated engagement in carefully listening to the community could help identify [why <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4ZoJKF_VuA>](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4ZoJKF_VuA), how and what will be the best approach.

Staff's evaluation of the two approaches is as follows:

Each of the four focus areas could be its own standalone project requiring different layers of community involvement. Areas 1 (Policy/Government) and 4 (Community Policing) could have policy level implications that eventually need Board approval. To ensure success, this process could benefit from starting off with more community listening and learning sessions, that lead to the Board taking formal action. Given the breadth and magnitude of the subject matter, staff recommends finding a facilitator with experience navigating discussions of race, equity and policy. Staff recommends against putting staff, the Board or a community member in a facilitation role. We want our most vested people as participants in the process, not the process leaders. We think the most effective approach would be to involve the Board as participants alongside the community for a portion of the process (similar to the DPZ engagement). Using an objective facilitator may also reduce any perception that staff or the Board is trying to steer the outcome or "just go through the motions." This topic is important and complex, and a qualified facilitator is crucial to its success.

Areas 2 (Education/Youth) and 3 (Culture/Entertainment) are non-policy level items. With these we can be more creative and flexible. The Town already has great Recreation staff who can work with interested community members, and help with the youth element (as noted in the review of the Youth Advisory Board above). We can also engage the Town's Economic Development staff and get the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses involved. With community involvement, we think we can host or facilitate great multi-cultural events that will bring people together. Staff had a few things in the works before COVID hit, and there are some COVID related challenges with community events, so we suggest waiting to schedule such events until the uncertainty clears up. It will be easier to generate momentum if we know we can actually host some events and meet in-person.

Implementation

Based on Board direction on which option to pursue, including more community engagement if necessary at this stage, we could create a small action team that includes a community member or members, a few staff (including one from the Police Department) and a Trustee to create either a clear purpose and duties for a DEI Advisory Board, or a clear scope of service and RFP to find a facilitator. The action team would also be responsible for establishing timelines, coordinating marketing, attending meetings and updating the Board. Most importantly, this group would be the liaison working with everyone to identify clear objectives and deliverables. It is important the team be comprised of community member(s), staff and Board Member so each group's interests are represented; if we are trying to create equity, the process should reflect the same.

Staff recommends facilitated engagement before creating an Advisory Board. As noted for the Youth Advisory Board, the formal Advisory Committee structure is limiting in many ways and takes a long time to see results. The focus areas are so important, staff believes it is imperative to involve as many people as possible in creating solutions and generating community interest and support. Staff

also believes that effective community engagement involves meeting people on their terms; a facilitated engagement allows that, and allows the community, Board and staff to participate in the process. If this process indicates an advisory group is needed, then we can create one.

Continuing the Community Conversation

With the Police Directives Task Force starting soon, and as we determine next steps for Youth and DEI, there are many things we can do to keep the community conversation about racial justice going and to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Some ideas for the board's consideration include the following:

- Movie Club - one to view about each month and have a conversation
- Book Club - discuss after reading, and working with the High Plains Library District to coordinate "On the Same Page" community read events.
- Cooking (dishes that are diverse) - invite local restaurants for a demo and discussion
- Voices of Erie History - identify historical figures (and their living family members) who can share diverse cultural stories and display in a digital way for the community to enjoy and learn from
- Artist talk and demo - find local artists who can help illustrate social justice issues, as was done with the Innocence Lost, and Arts + Immigration Project
- Drumming/Guitar Culture workshop - engage local musicians in ways that demonstrate how music bonds community
- Involve in some fashion the 40+ applicants who will not make the cut for the Police Directives Community Task Force
- Include hearing and visually impaired residents in a discussion and how we as a community can better aid them

Board of Trustees Priorities

Staff's recommendations help promote the following Board of Trustees' priorities:

- ☒ **Engaged and Diverse Community**
- ☒ **Prosperous Economy**
- ☒ **Small Town Feel**
- ☒ **Safe and Healthy Community**
- ☒ **Effective Governance**

ATTACHMENTS:

None