

Freedom and Unity Task Force DRAFT Minutes July 20, 2023

Attending: Wendy Turnbull, Anne Hanson, Susie Houston, Bru Milne, Jeanine Young, Daniel Solomon, Susan Clark (via Zoom)

Absent: Cedar Hanan, Rudy Chase, Carol Ceraldi, Farley Brown

The meeting was held in the Craftsbury Library and was called to order at 5:45pm.

Meeting recorder: Daniel Solomon

FLYER/POSTER/WEBSITE

It was decided that Carol's excellent poster should be put up around town in the early fall and should go up on the Town's website ASAP. VT Secretary of State & VT Humanities Council's "Freedom and Unity" graphic book is on the homepage. We should ask Michelle to create a single icon on the homepage where clicking on it brings up all of our materials: graphic book, poster, schedule of meetings with a note that all are welcome to attend.

We will also need a quarter-page or half-page version of the poster for handing out. It should be on cardstock. Can we use the Town's color printer?

It was also proposed that a list of the volunteers working on the F&U Task Force and their contact info should appear under the F&U page on the website and that Michelle could create a unique email for Wendy so that people can send questions or comments to us.

OUTREACH EFFORTS TO DATE

Farley is stepping down from F&UTF due to the demands of also serving on the Town Planning Commission. It is hoped that she will continue as our link to Sterling College. It was noted that their staff will be jammed in the fall due to staff reductions. Bru and Susie also offered to pick up any slack with Sterling. It was also suggested Laura Lee Berry from Sterling should be a part of how we talk about democracy. Reference was made to the Equity and Inclusion Committee, which was created in response to the Black Lives Matter. We need to be aware of this history as we reach out to Sterling students.

Sterling student participation in F&U was also discussed. One question for Michelle is how many students register to vote in Craftsbury. Regardless of whether they register, it would be good to encourage the students to attend Town Meeting and to get involved in other Town activities. [The same should probably apply to high school students.]

The overriding work for F&UTF is "How to get involvement of people who feel that they are in the 'Out Group.' Some people may feel that nothing will change because 'The Powers That Be' don't want change." One of our goals is to move from an "Either/Or" mindset to "Both/And." It doesn't have to be either Town Meeting reverts to exactly how it was traditionally run with only 150 people participating or we move to only doing mailed/dropped off ballots as was done during Covid that resulted in more than 400 people voting.

It was discussed whether we should create the Polarities exercise on-line on Front Porch Forum and whether that should be done in advance of the two fall meetings. Susan Clark said it's not helpful to do the exercise in an anonymous way. The point is to expose people to all "four coordinates" and hear the comments raised and to participate themselves. Often one hears people express ideas that are not what one might have expected. That's an important part of the exercise. However, she noted there are many questions we can ask online and/or ways to engage people to allow new ideas to emerge and to allow people to participate anonymously.

MEETING IN A BOX

This is for outreach to town committees, community groups, and particularly focused on reaching people who normally would not participate and may not in fact come to the big meetings. But we can incorporate their ideas through meeting with them, particularly if we can do it ahead of the fall meetings to enrich those discussions. For example, why do the "Out Groups" feel left out of town decision making? What could we do to make them feel their contributions would be valued and considered. These meetings should START NOW. We should take written notes at these meetings and eventually provide them to Don Brown for the Historical Society's project on recording people's personal stories.

We should use the Blueberry Festival, August 5, to start public outreach and it would be great if we could have the quarter-page handout available.

OTHER

Is the Google Doc accessible to the F&UTF? Resend the link to everyone.

"TO DO" SUMMARY

CAROL'S POSTER

- Up around town in the early fall

- Quarter/Half Page version printed in color on cardstock via Michelle

TOWN WEBSITE

- Get all materials, including unique email address for Wendy, under F&UTF page

OUTREACH

- Special efforts needed for Sterling College, including sensitively involving the students

- Continued effort to get involvement of people who feel that they are in the 'Out Group'

- Move people from an "Either/Or" mindset to "Both/And"

- Use "Meeting In A Box" to help F&UTF volunteers to do outreach and take written notes on those meetings

GOOGLE DOCS

- Resend the link to the F&UTF

NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 21, 6:30PM, CRAFTSBURY LIBRARY