

# Diversity and Inclusion Committee



## Resolution of the Township of Bernar

1 Collyer Lane, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
908-766-2510; www.bernards.org

### Resolution #2020-0234

Resolution to Create a Diversity and Inclusion Committee

**WHEREAS**, Bernards Township is a community dedicated to fostering a welcoming environment and providing its residents with an exceptional place to live; and

**WHEREAS**, Bernards Township believes in the inherent dignity and worth of each human being and that our community can become even stronger, more cohesive and more interesting by embracing its diversity and capitalizing on the strength resulting from that diversity; and

**WHEREAS**, Bernards Township believes learning about our differences can bring people closer together, allow us to recognize how much we have in common as human beings, and further advance and enhance the mutual respect, hospitality and warmth of our community; and

**WHEREAS**, Bernards Township believes it is best to explore these topics in an open, positive environment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Bernards Township Committee, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Township Committee hereby authorizes the establishment of a committee to be named the “Diversity and Inclusion Committee” dedicated to fostering an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance of each individual to further strengthen Bernards Township as a welcoming exceptional place to live, work and grow.
2. The duties of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall be as follows:
  - (a) To advise the Township Committee, at least twice annually, on opportunities to continue to promote and build on harmony among all Township residents;
  - (b) To further advise on ways to encourage goodwill, cooperation, and unity among the diverse residents of the Township;
  - (c) To recommend educational and cultural programs to foster unity and develop a sense of community; and
  - (d) Such other duties as shall be suggested and approved by the Township Committee.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the membership of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall consist of 11 members, which shall formally meet on a monthly basis. The monthly meetings shall be open to the public. Members shall be selected by the Township Committee consensus and should, to the greatest extent possible, reflect the diversity of Bernards Township and serve for a period of one year. The Township Committee shall annually designate one of the members to serve as Chair and presiding officer.

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To further advise on ways to encourage goodwill, cooperation, and unity among the diverse residents of the Township*

**Deborah Ablordeppey**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**Joan Bannan**  
TC Liason  
12/31/2021

**Sophia Chadda**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**John Coelho**  
Chairperson  
12/31/2021

**Jane Conklin**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**Nancy Cook**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**Sofia Fernandez**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**Stacy Irvine**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**Ana Duarte-McCarthy**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**Goutham Puppala**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

**Patrice Whitehouse**  
Regular  
12/31/2021

# Embracing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as an approach to *further* strengthen the Township as an exceptional welcoming place to live

We shared our stories: we have a great town but how can we capitalize on opportunities to make it *even better*?

**1**

**Establishing  
Principles of  
Mutual Respect  
and Dialogue**



**2**

**Framing the  
Committee's  
intent  
the "what"**



**3**

**Connected  
Outreach  
the "who"**



**4**

**Community  
Engagement  
the "how"**

**Listening, modeling the  
behaviors we aspire to  
with each other and our  
residents**



**Draft definitions for  
Diversity and  
Inclusiveness suitable  
for a township aligned  
with Vision**



**Comprehensively  
identify and compile an  
inclusive listing of all  
associations/groups  
across the township**



**Our approach:  
Understand the baseline,  
analyses & recommend  
forums with indicators of  
success**

# Definitions

*Diversity* is the representation of our varied personal characteristics and identities,\* collectively and as individuals. We seek to proactively engage, understand, value , respect and draw on a variety of perspectives. We believe solutions can be achieved by affirming our similarities, as well as by finding value in our differences.

*Inclusion* nurtures a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all.

*Equity* seeks to support fair treatment, impartiality and equality of opportunity to information and resources based on an environment built on mutual respect and trust.

\*age, race/color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, disability, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, religion, parental status, thinking and communication styles, including among others

# Vision

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is dedicated to fostering an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance of each individual, to further strengthen Bernards' Township as a welcoming exceptional place to live, work and grow.

**Mission:** The Diversity and Inclusion Committee seeks to celebrate the diverse heritage and cultural backgrounds of our residents by proposing recommendations for raising awareness, fostering respect, inclusiveness, and create an engaged and respectful community experience.

**Responsibilities:** The duties of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee include advising the Township Committee on opportunities:

1. To continue to promote and build on harmony among all Township residents
2. To further advise on ways to encourage goodwill, cooperation, and unity among the diverse residents of the Township
3. To recommend educational and cultural programs to foster unity and develop a sense of community deepening engagement

# Objectives

- 1) **Defining Diversity & Inclusion as it pertains to our Township**
- 2) **Establish a baseline from data: where are we as a community today?**
  - a. Identify Strengths and Commonalities
  - b. Identify potential areas for improvement
  - c. Diversity relative to Integration: barriers to engagement

## **Create a stronger community focused on common values and culture**

- a. Addressing Isolation: Support forums and vehicles for community integration (example, elderly, veterans)
- b. Communication: Opportunities to learn about each other linking groups to learn about each other
- c. Community Assistance: Neighbor-Helping-Neighbor Initiatives

## **Measuring Outcomes**

### **Example of Engagement Outcomes**

1. **Higher number of responders** to annual township survey (previously only over a 1000)
2. Volunteer and nonprofit organizations representing the broad diversity of our community **are connected**
3. The township residents from across all groups **understand and contribute towards the longer-term quality of life measures** (*safety, high standards of living, park and recreation facilities, schools and culture* )

# Potential Opportunities to Build Awareness that we have discussed

1. Serve as ambassadors to promote healthy respectful dialogue and interaction across the township
2. Curate video briefs of Resident Stories (see next slide) related to Diversity & Inclusion and update *Heritage Months* using existing Somerset County content on Landing Page <https://www.bernards.org/boards/inclusion-committee>
3. Continue to engage the broader residents to inform Municipality about potential opportunities for events e.g. Asian Rally.
4. Build awareness of D&I Committee vision and objectives with a booth at future Charter Days (2022), various other monthly events providing relevant input when requested by Township Committee.
5. Sponsor Forums & Workshops with expert speakers to provide tools for residents and staff on open, transparent communication related to engaging across different backgrounds, bias, discrimination.
6. Enable technology to support accessibility to Township Committee sessions for Public Comment.
7. Support opportunities to connect different groups/societies through **accountable representatives** for combined cross-cultural exchange to build a thriving ecosystem (see next slide). examples:
  - a) one event for *all* communities from Asia, (under discussion)
  - b) link Boy and Girl Scouts groups and others with accountable for Veterans groups & Senior Housing to address isolation



# Resident Stories



# Outreach Team compiled a comprehensive list which will enable greater exchange across different groups

Updated Municipal Database from 35 to *over*  
75 Societies, Non-profits, Groups

**Accountable Representatives in each who  
responded to our outreach**

**Networking Plan under consideration  
to 'connect the dots'**

One Community  
Database

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/1fS\\_Bn\\_DjIVRI\\_O3lualUoWV5Y0ZZlufAYQeQ2E2UaA/htmlview](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/1fS_Bn_DjIVRI_O3lualUoWV5Y0ZZlufAYQeQ2E2UaA/htmlview)





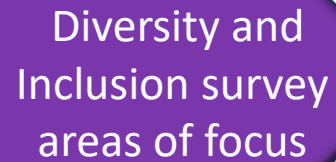
# Diversity and Inclusion Committee – Brief Community Survey

## Purpose:

Establish a baseline of our community perspectives and experiences on Diversity and Inclusion to better understand where the opportunities are these areas within Bernards Township.

## Implementation Strategy

- Outreach through Community Groups
- Website/Facebook



Diversity and  
Inclusion survey  
areas of focus

- Values (3)
- Engagement (5)
- Belonging (6)
- Inclusion (1 question; 15 drop down items)
- Career – Hiring, Evaluation, Promotion (3)
- Belonging (4)
- Other Open Comments (4)
- Open Questions (3)
- Optional Demographic Questions (10)
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Religious Beliefs
  - Race and Ethnicity
  - Military Service
  - Disability
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Fill in item: other characteristics

*The survey will take approximately five to ten minutes to complete.*

*Responses will be anonymous, and all responses and results will be reported in the aggregate.*

# We completed a feasibility & discussed promotion of a survey with the Municipal Clerk

*Google Forms* is the preferred choice for creating survey forms as the questions are one of these types: multiple choice, short answer, dropdowns, checkboxes

The surveys can be created using a google account and all the answers are confidentially stored in the storage associated with that google account in an excel spreadsheet (easy to download and process)

The use of this feature is free and has enough features for all simplistic surveys that do not have questions that are conditional with multiple branches.

Seamless user experience:

- Users can receive the link to the survey form via email, twitter, facebook or whatsapp.
- Clicking on the link will open the form in a web-view.
- Users can fill the form without having to login to google. The feature to prevent "Allow only 1 response per user" should not be checked in the survey by the creator.
- A QR code can be easily developed that would take users on a mobile device to quickly open the link. This helps with linking the posters to the survey.

Disseminating the survey:

Google form allows the form to be made public as a clickable web-link to the survey that can be sent/forwarded in all the existing forums and groups in the **One Community** database.

# Recommendations to the Township Committee

Township Committee

Municipal Staff

## D&I Committee

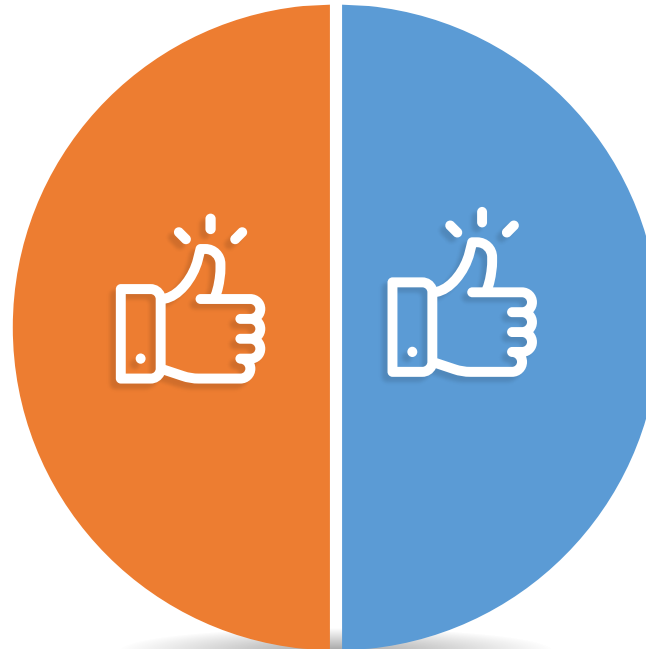
1.Upload Definitions, Stories  
other on D&I landing page and  
support awareness in events



2.Upload One-Community  
database to landing page



3.Support and promote designed  
Google Survey



*Work closely with Staff  
to advance and  
regularly report back to  
Township Committee*

*Encourage goodwill, cooperation, and unity among the diverse residents of the Township*