

**Friends of Casco Bay**  
**Minutes: Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (EJDEI) Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, November 13, 2023, 4pm via Zoom**

Attendance, board: Pat Ianni (chair), Deb Debiegun, Sandy Marsters  
Staff: Will Everitt, Sara Freshley, Ivy Frignoca

**1. Updates from Staff and Board Committee members since our last meeting**

Should we continue to meet at this time and date - yes. This time works for everyone.

Sara shared that she is beginning to do high school and college student group engagement work, contacting environmental clubs to invite them to be a part of our work for the Bay. Sara invited students to participate in Film Fest by giving away some tickets to SMCC and USM students.

Ivy shared that there are two areas where we are deepening our EJ work. First, as we begin working on improving the state's stormwater rules, (Chapter 500), Ivy will serve on the stakeholder group to draft the rule revisions. Sara is going to do EJ watershed mapping in Casco Bay to identify areas between environmental justice populations and stormwater pollution in preparation for eventually engage those communities in this process. We are using stormwater maps and the EPA EJ databases. This work will happen next year.

Secondly, DMR is holding a series of conversations with shellfish harvesters and aquaculturists, which are open to the public. Sara will attend the first of these meetings tomorrow. We will also be going to the Fishermen's Forum to hear more from lobstermen. This is part of our work to better understand the concerns of those who depend on our coastal waters for their work.

Sandy shared that Ellen and Will are meeting with Samantha Bengs to discuss about Sam's potential board service. Sam meets many of our desired skills, experiences, and backgrounds we wish to see on the board but we need to evaluate her fit.

**2. Brief review of our EJDEI Statement**

EJDEI Statement (v9) was presented to Board at the 9/19/2023 meeting and adopted by unanimous vote. This statement can now be found at the bottom every page of website (as of 10/4/2023) via a link to "[Our Statement on Environmental Justice](#)." There were two comments made by board members prior to the adoption of the Statement:

- How will we hold ourselves accountable? Per the minutes of the 9/19/2023 meeting, we responded that we will hold ourselves accountable by frequently revisiting our goals made in the Statement, namely assessing our progress on the six "actions" listed in the Statement and the goals set forth in our Strategic Plan (2023-2028).
- We should be alert to "going around in circles"? We responded that we hope to avoid this by adhering to the Operating Plan, following the guidelines of the Strategic Plan, and sticking to the budget. We also hope that our EJDEI goals will be used to inform and steer our governance and board recruitment processes.

Ivy suggested creating a matrix to keep track of what we are doing and to measure progress. It can be a summary and shared frequently. Will offered to take a first stab at it and will pass it around the next meeting.

### **3. Discussion about our planned future work with Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS)**

As part of our comment to EJDEI, we are hiring CCCS (see MOU attached) to help us with three things:

1. Provide a board and staff training on the immigrant experience in Maine so we are better educated and prepared to have conversations with potential new partners and do outreach. This training will take place April 30, 5pm-8pm and will be for Board and staff. We will debrief the training at our May EJDEI committee meeting.
2. Help us with relationship building: CCCS will introduce us to organizations we are not currently working with who may have intersecting concerns with us.
3. Provide advice and consultation on EJDEI work at an operational level. Staff leadership is meeting with CCCS on January 23.

There was a discussion on how engaging the immigrant community in Portland and ensuring that it connects to our work to protect the Bay.

### **4. Discuss our ongoing Board work to effectuate the EJDEI actions enumerated in our Statement**

Pat shared that we previously discussed initially focusing on Board recruitment. How do we build relationships with new partners and new segments of the community to diversify our board in terms of age, experience, race, country of origin, etc.? Can CCCS help us reach out to new colleagues and partners?

Before we get to a more diverse board we can focus on other actions like networking and building relationships. It was acknowledged that a lot of this is going to fall onto staff to lead.

Ellen and Sandy have been leading the board recruitment process. We had one person of color on our potential board recruitment list so far. There was a discussion of adding people with more diverse backgrounds to this list. By laying a foundation and relationships within more diverse groups, our networks will naturally become more diverse and this will take time. We should keep this in mind with gift memberships. Another idea was meeting with leaders in our community who are also people of color or represent other diverse groups, for example Jill Duson and Pious Ali, to find out if they know people who may be interested in our work. Perhaps we should consider writing articles and publishing them in other neighborhood newspaper to reach a wider audience. We will continue to consider these questions and add to the matrix as they come up.

### **5. Other Next Steps**

There was a short discussion about potentially reviewing governance documents and practices including by laws, committees, meeting format (in person, zoom, hybrid, etc.) for inclusivity.

Will shared that we operate a lot more openly than our bylaws read and he hopes that we make those things match up one day. Due to time, this conversation was kept short.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.



**CROSS CULTURAL  
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Cross Cultural Community Services  
Equality Community Center  
15 Casco St.  
Portland, ME 04101  
207.200.6261

[www.crossculturalcommunityservices.org](http://www.crossculturalcommunityservices.org)

**Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS) &  
Friends of Casco Bay  
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

This agreement aims to determine the roles and responsibilities between CCCS & Friends of Casco Bay regarding their work on racial equity.

Friends of Casco Bay is an organization that exists to protect the environmental health of Casco Bay. In our environmental protection work, we collect data, advocate for the health of the waters, and engage the community in our advocacy work. We collect data continuously to monitor the bay in our continuous monitoring stations, seasonal sampling, and algal bloom tracking. Using data collected by staff and volunteers, in our Bay-keeping Program, we advocate to protect and maintain the health of our waters. We engage the community by educating people on the issues affecting the bay and calling them to action.

Cross Cultural Community Services is a non-profit organization run and owned by three women of color who have trained community members and organizations on cultural differences, US customs and norms, and policies to promote an inclusive society. They have vast knowledge, education, and expertise in refugees, immigrants, and persons of color. They work tirelessly in their own communities to partner and actively advocate for the social and racial rights of all. Through CCCS, they work with individuals and organizations to help them reach both their personal and professional goals to ensure organizations are more equitable.

CCCS will help Friends of Casco Bay by doing the below and engaging the community in the importance of protecting the bay and showing them that Casco Bay belongs to everyone. Therefore, CCCS will provide:

**Staff Consultation:**

- CCCS will consult with staff one-on-one or in groups with a focus on integrating DEI into their day-to-day operations and organizational practices.

**Training**

**Resettlement and Assimilation:**

- Review the immigration/arrival status of refugees and immigrants, discuss their plight in the US, the trauma endured, and assimilation and acculturation from living in a refugee camp and resettling in the US. We will also provide information on the

immigrant experience specifically within the greater Portland area and the larger Casco Bay watershed.

- Debrief: TBD

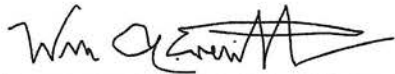
### **Post Training Session: Community Connections and Relationship Building:**

- CCCS will develop a plan with Friends of Casco Bay to connect them to racially diverse community organizations in order to help them connect to and build relationships around environmental issues, including the protection of Casco Bay.
- In order to reflect the populations of the watershed, CCCS will take a look at Friends of Casco Bay's recruiting and hiring practices. CCCS will also provide recommendations for board members in order to diversify and also ...

CCCS will charge Friends of Casco Bay \$1500 for each 3 hour training session and \$500 per hour for each debrief, recommended after each session. For any one-on-one coaching outside of the training sessions and debriefs are \$300 per hour. CCCS asks that 25% of the total estimated amount be paid upfront, upon the signature of this contract, with the remaining balance distributed in quarterly increments. Both parties agree that if there is any additional work requested beyond the above, both parties will determine a process and price to complete the additional work.

CCCS and Friends of Casco Bay can withdraw from this agreement under and/or if any extenuating circumstances exist by giving written notice of intent to withdraw at least thirty (30) calendar days before the effective withdrawal date. The withdrawal of a signatory shall not in any way alter or rescind contractual obligations that have already been completed. An amendment signature shall provide notice of any withdrawal or termination of this contract by all parties.

By signing this MOU, each party agrees to the contents written, knowing it can be amended at any time if the revisions are done in writing with both parties agreeing to the new agreement.



Will Everitt, Executive Director

9/27/2023

Date



Cross Cultural Community Services

10/29/23

Date