

Berkshire County NAACP Social Justice Action Committee Report

October 2019

General

We shared information from Harvard's Data Smart City Solutions program on "Racial Equity as Resiliency: Lessons from the Boston Economic Mobility Lab" with Mayors Tom Bernard and Linda Tyler and Berkshire's Economic Development Director Ben Lamb. Both mayors responded immediately and positively to the opportunities to work together with this program to augment their work with Working Cities.

We encouraged the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (NBCC) to hold one of their forums this year on diversity/inclusion, which their membership has voted to do.

Businesses Against Bigotry Campaign

We have met with business owners from Circa, Jan Perry Realty, and Otto's. We have a meeting scheduled with Greylock Federal Credit Union and have requested a meeting with Hotel on North.

After our first meetings with business owners, based on their input, we decided that the best next step for this project was to hold an open dialogue between representatives of local businesses and the NAACP community, especially people of color. The purpose of the conversation is to develop a common understanding of what it means to be "open to all." We have identified and approached businesses that represent a cross section of downtown Pittsfield enterprises in terms of size, business purpose, and location, as well as being ones we assumed would be supportive of this effort.

The Executive Committee has tentatively approved our request to use the January general membership meeting for this dialogue.

Social Justice Action Committee

Drew Herzig, co-chair

Rebecca Thompson, co-chair

Arlene Kirsch

Sloan Lettman