

TO: Mayor Nelson and Board of Trustees
FROM: Allison Matson, Assistant Village Manager
DATE: August 20, 2018
SUBJECT: Consideration of a Resolution Adopting the Guiding Principles for Diversity & Inclusion



During the Board's 2017 strategic planning process, the theme of fostering a more diverse, united and inclusive community emerged through the community survey, interviews and planning session discussions. At the same time, during the Village's branding project, the topic of celebrating diversity emerged repeatedly, resulting in the inclusion of the concept of 'welcoming' in the Village's brand.

One of the five strategies adopted by the Board in the Strategic Plan is as follows:

Foster a diverse, united and inclusive community. Pursue activities to maintain Flossmoor's diversity, promote inclusiveness, and build communications, understanding and unity among residents across neighborhoods and throughout the community.

The Village's efforts on this topic are consistent with efforts in other cities across the country on the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion, and the Village Board specifically requested that the our Community Relations Commission (CRC) work with them on this initiative. The National League of Cities and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) are both emphasizing the topic. To help facilitate the CRC discussion of the topic, staff did some initial research and attended the National League of Cities training on Race, Equity and Leadership. The National League of Cities is an advocacy organization for cities of all sizes, governed by elected officials from cities across America and with programming geared toward local elected officials. The vision of the REAL program is: A nation in which every local official is equipped to effectively lead and serve an inclusive, thriving and healthy community. Inclusive, Thriving and Healthy Communities are safe places where people from all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds thrive socially, economically, academically and physically.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Board asked that the Community Relations Commission consider the strategy. The REAL program provided some guidance and background for staff to begin the discussion with the Community Relations Commission. Staff has worked with Community Relations Commission to draft Guiding Principles for Diversity and Inclusion, which act as a vision statement for the Village on this topic. The Commission began by answering the question "What does an equitable and inclusive community look like?" The answers to that question were grouped into the following categories: Shared Values, Representation, Communication and Connections, Access and Events.

The Guiding Principles are intended to be considered by the Village Board and staff in carrying out services, policies and programs. The Guiding Principles are aspirational and are intended to act as a vision statement for the Village's work on diversity and inclusion.

Staff recommends that the Village Board review, revise as necessary, and adopt the Guiding Principles through a resolution. The proposed Guiding Principles below were drafted by the Community Relations Commission with staff support and revised with Board input.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Shared Values

The Village of Flossmoor is energized by diversity in all its forms and is welcoming to families of all descriptions. The village recognizes that the definition of diversity itself should be broad and inclusive, including diversity of religion, gender, sexuality, family, age, culture, and race. The Village seeks to promote a community that is accepting, respectful and welcoming to all.

Representation

People of diverse backgrounds need to be included and represented in government. The Village's resident volunteer commissions should have members who represent different neighborhoods and backgrounds. The Village's diversity should be displayed in marketing materials and communications.

Communication and Connections

The Village of Flossmoor seeks to encourage dialogue both with its residents and among its residents, providing opportunities for all residents' voices to be heard. The Village will encourage, and in some cases, facilitate, or work with community partners, to facilitate communications within neighborhoods. To this end, the Village's objective is to connect residents to each other and their government in a way that makes them feel valued.

Access

The Village's programs and services should operate in a way that is fair and equitable. Services and community resources should be easily accessible. The Village will take concerns of discrimination seriously. The Village will encourage other government agencies in Flossmoor to promote these principles in their services and programs.

Events

Village programs and events should offer a variety of activities that celebrate all cultures and allow residents to celebrate diversity, become more united, and learn from each other.

NEXT STEPS

A smaller sub-group of the commission (Rosalind Mustafa, Michael Harris and Sgt. Keith Taylor) is working with Allison to develop some concrete strategies to start to implement the Guiding Principles, including participating in the National League of Cities Network for Community Conversations on Race Relations, Justice and Equity. To date, this smaller group has settled on

four areas of emphasis for the next year:

- Training on the topic of equity and inclusion for staff, the Board and commissions, and the community. Training is important so that we are speaking the same language and as governing officials share a comparable understanding of the diversity and inclusion concerns facing our community.
- Identifying ways in which to broaden our reach (cast a larger net) while maintaining our standards of excellence in the following areas:
 - Incorporating additional recruitment strategies to build an even more diverse workforce
 - Researching best practices and opportunities to diversify the pool of vendors and suppliers
- Incorporating inclusivity into events and programs by helping residents connect to each other and having vendors and programs that reach a wide range of interests and ages