

April 19, 2024

RE: EQUITY COMMITTEE  
From: Betsy Blair

betsyblair33@gmail.com

Please consider appointing me to be a member of Bristol's Equity Committee. I have had experiences that would make me a useful contributor to this effort. This has been a major focus of my life. I have had both one-time encounters and sustained relationships where I helped people navigate some aspect of life in the dominant culture or promoted fair treatment. I am constantly alert to these needs. Here are some examples:

I gave sustained assistance to a Cuban teenager caught between trying to understand boy-girl interactions in the U.S. and her family that insisted she never to talk to a boy or let him touch her unless she had a chaperone. She was so tense about this conflict that she couldn't speak English. After I coached her on dating customs, she began to speak aloud in class - and was moved to a higher grade level within the week. Afterward she insisted I go home with her so her grandmother could see what kind of woman had been saying such things to her granddaughter.

An elderly Black woman, who had been raised by her grandmother (who had been born a slave) worked for an elderly White woman who had been raised with racist attitudes. It took a few years to convince the Black woman to confront and resist her White employer's unjust work demands and low wages. When she did, the employer backed down, treated her better, and they became much more like friends.

I have helped a Navajo family navigate a health system that has not served them well. The grandmother who is in her late 70s has been turned away from doctors or hospitals that refused to treat her - about 5 times in the past 7 years, saying she is going to die so she should go home and get her papers in order. But the next time, when they see her still alive, they treat her.

A refugee Bosnian Muslim family mainly needed friendship because they knew no one in America. I helped them with English and drove the husband to a mosque twice a month. He worked in the laundry of a hospital. His English was poor, but in Bosnia he had been a lawyer, so I figured he probably had the ability to be an administrator. I urged him to explain his background to the hospital. They quickly put him in charge of the laundry department.

I have taken courses on Muslim mental health and on inter-religious dialogue. I have known a number of Africans, and once gave a lecture series on African contemporary problems.

In 1973 I overcame my future boss's objection to hiring me to do construction work (ceramic tile). I was paid the lowest wages even though I was soon being sent to repair work done by the highest paid workers. Relationships with the men were challenging. I learned later they had laid bets on a race to seduce me. When they had come to respect me, one asked if there are any words that I regard as profanity. I told him that the words that most offend me are "...words that are used to intentionally hurt a child of God, such as the word 'nigger'." Afterwards, I never overheard another racist joke spoken by anyone in that tile company.

I was appointed as a Commissioner to the Human Relations Commission of Montgomery County, MD - now called the Human Rights Commission. I served a 3-year term and chaired the Education Committee. I also initiated and chaired the Community Relations Committee. At the time, I was the youngest person ever appointed to the Commission.

**From:** [Elissa Cobb](#)  
**To:** [Bristol Town Administrator](#)  
**Subject:** Interest in serving on the Equity Committee  
**Date:** Monday, May 6, 2024 11:21:42 AM

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Hi Valerie,

Thanks for returning my call today.

I am interested in serving on the town's newly forming Equity Committee.

I spoke with Porter Knight extensively a couple of days ago, and got some clarity about the committee. As a native of Bristol, I feel proud of my home town, and I also feel the edges where equity based growth needs to be addressed. I have come to understand the importance of change, and the truth that my family and I will do better within our community when everyone does better within the community. I have hopes for the work of the Equity Committee, and am looking forward to its possibilities.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Elissa Cobb  
[kestrel@gmavt.net](mailto:kestrel@gmavt.net)  
802-349-2301

## **Bristol Town Administrator**

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**From:** Ainaka Luna <bochika@me.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 17, 2024 7:30 AM  
**To:** Bristol Town Administrator; Porter Knight  
**Subject:** Equity Committee

Hi:

I am a resident of Bristol and would like to participate in this committee. Porter invited me.

Regards,  
Ainaka Luna  
BochikaTours.com

## **Bristol Town Administrator**

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**From:** Darla Senecal <heydarla@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 2:03 PM  
**To:** Bristol Town Administrator  
**Subject:** Equity committee

Hello Valerie,

I would very much like to be considered as a member of the Equity Committee.

I have taken part in a few different equity trainings and worked with the group from Rutland that created the equity statement signed by many Vermont towns.

I am thinking there will not be a high number of meetings and I can make them work in my schedule and in conjunction with my family commitments.

I hope you will find me a suitable candidate.

Darla Senecal  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Krista Siringo](#)  
**To:** [Bristol Town Administrator](#)  
**Subject:** equity committee  
**Date:** Friday, May 10, 2024 7:28:31 AM

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Hi, Valerie.

Are you still seeking volunteers to sit on a town equity committee? If so, I would be interested.

Thanks,  
Krista

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Krista Siringo  
Associate, [The Creative Discourse Group](#)  
she/her ([why](#))

## **Bristol Town Administrator**

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**From:** Trevor <twinlens@protonmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 6:08 PM  
**To:** Bristol Town Administrator  
**Subject:** Re: Bristol Equity Committee Interest

Hello, Valerie,

For the Equity Committee, can you share how much time would be involved?

I'm interested based upon recommendation from Porter Knight, but I have a couple other volunteer commitments and want to be sure they don't conflict.

Thank you.

Trevor Wilson

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.