

Friday, February 4, 2022
Meeting Notes

Weiwei Wang of the Vermont Professionals of Color Network began the meeting. Calls to page 17, lines 11-15 – “the Dept. of Economic Development in collaboration with the VT Economic Development Authority, the Vermont Center for Emerging Technology, and the Vermont Small Business Center should design and implement the BIPOC Business and Development program” – while the work and development these orgs have done in VT, they are white- led business groups – WW states “ they do not have a clear understanding of the realities of what it means to be a BIPOC business” – she proposes that the bill name specific BIPOC stakeholders and organizations (like the VPOC network) to help with the design and implementation of the program – who knows the community better than the community itself

Sen. Ram Hinsdale – waiting to champion this bill through the Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs bill. She finds that this bill gets the resources to the most impacted communities. VT has a 50% difference in home ownership between Black and White Vermonters. POC own about .06% of land in VT – not because they’re not seeking it – there is a need for access to capital. Mentions S.147 – language access bill for information for the state.

Debbie Ingram and Mary Beth Barritt of Vermont Interfaith Action – interest in four centers across state – needs for BIPOC Vermonters differ across different locations across Vermont, networking and mentoring relationships, most important point is that these programs are led by BIPOC individuals themselves

Curtis Reed Jr., the Executive Director of Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity, sees the VPOC network as the future institutional presence for BIPOC in the community.

Rev. Mark Hughes, representing Vermont Racial Justice Alliance work at eradicating systemic racism through platforms and initiatives. Emphasizes this is generational work – it is an investment in VT future.

Witness testimony from Keren Sita, an Affiliate of the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance spoke of high regard of Rep. Brian Cina and his leadership on H.406. She offers support of the bill.

Isaac Owusu, Director of Community Engagement and Support, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance highlighted the importance on this investment and support of the bill.

Rev. Dr. Arnold Thomas, a Pastor from the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church calls on Dr. King and offers ardent support for H.406 – it will not be sufficient, but it is the first necessary step. He was incredibly inspirational in his oratory.