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To: [Township Committee](#)
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Subject: Year-end Recommendations from Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee
Date: Thursday, December 23, 2021 9:18:08 PM

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Dear Mayor Fields and Township Committee

We concluded an eventful inaugural first year on a positive note aligned with the **2020 Resolution** to *encourage goodwill, cooperation and unity* among the diverse residents of the Township.

<https://www.bernards.org/boards/inclusion-committee>

We adopted a listening environment and respectful practice of exchange and modeled these behaviors with the public who attended and reviewed our progress.

After early discussion in different work streams, we specifically defined a clear **Purpose, Goals** and **Objectives**, *significantly expanding* the current Township listing of groups and organizations (**One Community Database**) with key contacts that did not exist previously, and proposed a **Survey** to assess the sentiment of the community for what is working well and opportunities to improve.

While some and not all the recommendations were approved, we proceeded in our role as a facilitator "catalyst " to gather data on needs from residents and provide recommendations to the Township opening a dialogue with the community. This was exemplified by ideas for well-attended events both within and outside our township which were embraced and sponsored by the Municipality.

Notably, we were the only Township to exhibit at the Somerset County Diversity Festival in Somerville.

Our three recommendations to the Township Committee from our final meeting on Dec 8th include the following:

- 1) We recommend renewal of this Committee to continue to advise the

new Township Committee in 2022.

We received input from our **Meet-The-Diversity Forum** in October that we could serve as a dynamic platform to connect individual residents and their needs to groups and support deeper engagement making Bernards an even more welcoming place to live and raise a family.

2) We recommend informal **Community Exchange Forums** be hosted biannually or as needed (pandemic conditions permitting) in Township facilities to foster networking, supporting both groups and isolated individuals building on encouraging early progress that we have made. We detected early connections between the Parents for Exceptional Children, Parks and Recreations Dept, YMCA and the Basking Ridge Business Alliance

3) We recommend that the Township Committee provide sponsorship and make resources available for the above so as to build on the sense of community spirit and be receptive to future recommendations.

We wish you a healthy holiday season!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

John F Coelho
Chairman