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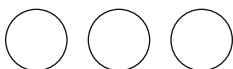
NEWS

'This is real action': Bridgeport-based consultant firm to lead Norwalk equity commission



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Updated: March 18, 2021 7:41 a.m.





Norwalk Chief of Community Services addresses the crowd at a press conference outside city hall regarding the hiring of Led By Us & Associates consulting firm.
City of Norwalk

NORWALK – Bridgeport-based consultant firm Led By Us & Associates was chosen by the city as the consultant for the newly established Equity and Justice For All Commission, the city announced Wednesday.

The firm will be paid \$150,000 for its work to foster a more inclusive community, \$50,000 of which was donated by the Fairfield County Community Foundation. Led By Us was chosen for its focus on responsible urban revitalization, Norwalk Chief of Community Services Lamond Daniels said.

“We understand and will not shy away that not all people in the city share the same experiences in this place of Norwalk that they call home, where they chose to live and they chose to raise their families,” Daniels said. “Today is about fostering a renewed vision to create that sense of community and belonging. This cannot be accomplished alone neither should it be.”

The consultant will work with the Equity and Justice For All Commission, which was formed after the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer last spring.

In July, the city released a request for proposals to fill the consultant position, but felt dissatisfied with the applicants, Morgan said. A modified RFP was released in November and the application period ended in January.

“It’s taken longer than he (the mayor) and community wanted,” Morgan said. “We issued an RFP and the quality of the responses wasn’t there. We wanted it done right, but not at cost of expediency.”

Ultimately, Led By Us & Associates was chosen from a pool of nine applicants.

The Common Council Community Services and Personally Committee is expected approve the consultant choice at its meeting Wednesday evening. The Common Council must vote on the firm's selection at the council's next meeting.

Led By Us Director of Economic Development Kelvin Ayala said the firm plans to collaborate and bridge gaps within the community.

"Today is big day for the city of Norwalk, and not just city of Norwalk. This is an opportunity to become a model city not just in the state of Connecticut, but nationwide," Ayala said. "When we first saw the RFP, we saw a community and municipality willing to engage in difficult conversations. That's why we're here."

"We have a very rich, diverse community, and now we have the opportunity to take those voices and bring those voices together and find action, not just words, but action and make real change," councilor David Heuvelman said.

"This is not just going to be one or two people coming up with these ideas. We want the entire community involved," councilor Greg Burnett said. "Not just creating a document that'll sit on a table for years to come, but be implemented and truly make a difference. This is not just soft words, this is real action."

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