There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Friday, January 17, 2020 at the Bloomfield Town Hall, Conference Room #5, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Present were: Mayor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown, Councilors Joseph Merritt, Rickford Kirton, Patrick DeLorenzo, Stephanie Calhoun and Danielle Wong

Also present were: Robert E. Smith, Town Manager, Sharron Howe, Assistant to the Town Manager and India M. Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent were: Deputy Mayor David Mann, Councilors C. Francis Politis and Kevin Gough

Presenter: Randi McCray

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m.

Mayor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown welcomed and gave a brief introduction of the presenter, Mrs. Randi McCray and purpose of the Pre-Council Retreat. Mrs. McCray presented on Unconscious and Implicit Bias.

The Town of Bloomfield community is growing to be more diverse with expanded cultural groups and ethnicities in town.

Ms. McCray discussed various issues around how to build racial equity in the community, learning and understanding the experiences of people.

The definition of unconscious/implicit bias is unknowingly aware of implicit social cognition, implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decision in an unconscious manner.

The first acceptable practical step to acknowledge that everyone has implicit bias. The Bloomfield Town Council can create a “Code of Conduct” as elected officials to be held to a higher standard of how we treat each other and their constituents.

It was noted that when issues aren’t addressed, the team validates the behavior. Individuals must be held accountable for their actions and acknowledge other people’s experiences.

The ultimate goal is to identify strategies on How to share space together to be able to work and serve the residents of Bloomfield. In addition, how to do the work internally first with the “same lens is key.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown commented on the importance to having a diverse community in Bloomfield. Mrs. McCray suggested scheduled several “Courageous Conversations” series to normalize regarding racial equity in a normalized environment.

The next step is to acknowledge that race does have an impact in people’s lives and this is what will Council to do about. An example of this step may be the racial impact on policies and identifying areas that should be rooted in civility to solve issues of the public.

Mrs. McCray also discussed the importance of building relationships, which is very critical when you may have across contention opinions.
Mr. Robert E. Smith, Town Manager suggested the development of a Code of Ethics for the Town Council as a standard practice, outlining public accountability, social equity, recognition that implicit racial bias and diversity are important, The Council need to have clarity and honesty of all communications.

In addition, there is a need to create safe spaces for have conversations so that issues can be addressed. What can the Town Council do to create a culture where people acknowledge their behaviors and take ownership?

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.