

NHRC Minutes April 17, 2025

Needham Town Hall: Great Plain Room

7:30pm-9:00pm

Members In attendance: Marlene Schultz, Keith LaFace, Cynthia Ganung, Lulu Wang, Greg Dunn, Marie Shapiro,

Liaisons in attendance: Belinda Carroll (police), Taylor Donaldson Jhurani (Town)

Absent: Tina Burgos Tina, Jen Howard Schroeder, Kerry Hurwitch, Bud Schram, Gemma Nauyokas

The meeting was called to order by Co-chair, Keith LaFace at 7:30pm.

Public comment- none

Minutes of the March 20, 2025 meeting were approved.

NHRC Statement Follow-Up

Keith will be presenting the statement at the May 13th select board meeting. The statement is regarding that we, the Needham Human Rights Committee, stand firmly in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion—and against all forms of discrimination.

Community conversation about Race – Cynthia

Kerry and Tina are also on the group

Date: Thursday May 22nd.

At library community room

6:45 – 8:45 – Start with refreshments at 6:30pm.

The main theme is being an inclusive community. Gary Baily, from Simons College, is facilitating. Possibly get highschool kids to help out on the event. LuLu suggested getting a flyer to the high school newsletter, which was well received.

Race Amity Day Program

2nd Sunday of June (June 8th), at 3-5pm.

Avery Field, at the Heights

There will be a dedication of a plaque to Richard Fry, a free man born to parents of slaves who left his land to the town for the children. In addition to the event, it was suggested to sign up for the Needham history center to receive local stories, like Richard Fry. Subscribe and learn at Needhamhistory.org

Juneteenth Program

Currently we have nothing planned

Checking if the town does have anything planned.

Needham Pride

June 15th, pride event leaves from the church.

We are looking to get something on the calendar for Pride.

NRN Mental Health Update – Marlene

Sent a letter with overview recently. One question is, Is Mental Health part of the NHRC mission?

Marlene is in a cohort of 15. Others are doing book talks and other events. She has a meeting next week with a facilitator, what should we do?

Cynthia suggested events that bring us together, like the multicultural festival. Support diversity, equity and inclusion.

Events /programs that can help and were suggested include:

Needham Thrives, September 28th – News coming soon

North Hill – program on grandparents, understanding Trans and how to support them.

Human Library – Greg

We are interested in bringing a Human Library event to Needham. What this would include is hosting an event where we would have people sign up as ‘books’ and others come and ‘check them out’ to discuss about the topic and hear about the book. The next steps are to get a clear plan from the Human Library and how to move forward.

Next step:

1. Get more info, contact the Human Library, how to set up the event? Details
2. What towns near us do this?
3. Needham community council, disabilities, others we could include?
4. Look up others that do this now in Boston and nearby areas.
5. Marlene can help as needed.

Old Business: QR Code

Keith can Add Logo, QR Code and post online.

Marlene said NRN group wanted to speak with her after presenting about NHRC. Disabilities commission; said they did not know they should have one person on the NHRC.

Town update

Checking with town about the 12th member, who is on our list but does not attend. Maya currently is not responding but is the 12th member. Need to work with town clerk about the next steps to remove Maya.

Person from the Commission on Disabilities wants to join the NHRC.

Needham has no direction about DEI, plans or initiatives now

Cynthia Announcement

NDI – Second Saturday has a gathering Needham Community Solidarity Gathering, second Saturday. Next May 10th

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregory Dunn