

NEEDHAM HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 15, 2018

Highland Room, Needham Town Hall.

Committee members in attendance: Abdul Cader Asmal, Marlene Schultz, Bud Schram, Kerry Hurwitch, Nadaa Ali, Amelia Klein & Lt. John Kraemer (police liaison)

Special guest: Marianne Cooley (Board of Selectman chairperson) & Dr. Dan Gutekanst (Superintendent of Schools)

Committee members absent: Cynthia Ganung, Jennifer Howard Schroeder (chair), Matt Schroeder (student liaison)

Marianne Cooley began by discussing what is happening with the proposed change to the name of the Board of Selectmen to the Select Board. Said at a recent retreat it seemed most of her committee was on board. Hearing on March 13. Marianne told us we as a NHRC board could not vote remotely (via email, etc.).

Jen & Matt arrived.

1. **MINUTES** of the January 2018 meeting were discussed and Lt. Kraemer had a change. Minutes approved for both December 2017 & January 2018.
2. Marlene discussed the wording of the letter for the Board of Selectman name change. Also discussed different groups speaking at meeting, Marlene thought it would be nice if a man spoke at the March 13 meeting.
3. Dr. Gutekanst said he would like to attend as many meetings as possible. Spoke briefly about the equity audit & its findings and awaiting its final reports. Final report should be available later in March. Jen mentioned it was a tough week. Matt spoke about it being a hard week due to the recent tragedy of the two high school students killed in the crosswalk. Dan echoed the strength of the students, teachers, police, etc. Lt. Kraemer also spoke about how great the kids were with this situation.
4. **Racial Justice Book Group. Diversity and Discussion book club.** First couple of books will be on race. First – “The Hate You Give”, second – “The Underground Railroad”. Third book might be town wide read – “Small Great Things” (possible?). Diversity book club dates and books: May 24: The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas. May 24 will be co-led by Jen from NHRC and Lois Bacon from the Friends of the Library.
June 21 Underground Railroad" by Colin Whitehead. June 21 discussion will be lead by Gretchen Cook-Anderson of the Needham Diversity Initiative.

5. Pollard STA Day, Thursday, April 12, 8-11am. Will copy the workshop we did at the high school. Matt volunteered to help. Jen will work with him.
6. Jen also spoke about the organization Visions, out of Dorchester and maybe the library would run a workshop. The library will get back to us. We would need their funding.
7. Membership update – Dan Rubin had to resign. We have a couple of open spots. Two community members have expressed interest. NHRC would like to have someone who lives in Needham Housing reappointed. Jen will follow up with NHA.
8. Discuss event we held with Diane Levin speaking about the affects of news media on children today. Great turnout. Different audience. Bud mentioned his wife who is a pre-school teacher really thought it was great. Marlene and Kerry mentioned the subject matter was a bit dated.
9. Matt and Kerry ran the Jan 31'st "One Day" workshop at Needham High School and Matt spoke about the workshops and how the event went. It was around Implicit Bias, and for the most part all went very well, although one at the end had a disruptive student. Otherwise it seemed to go pretty well.
10. Interracial Pot Luck Dinner – survey results are not in yet. Amelia mentioned it was proposed as an interracial discussion but it was not really that. Wondered if going out to other communities would be more beneficial.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Hurwitch, Recorder*

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, March 15, 2018 at 7:30 pm, Highland Room,
Town Hall**