

Needham Human Rights Committee Meeting
May 16, 2019 7:30pm
Highland Room, Town Hall

Members in attendance: Jennifer Howard Schroeder (co-chair), Christina Matthews (co-chair), Ashok Mehta, Marlene Schultz, Cynthia Ganung, Tracy McKay, Amelia Klein, Jared Pizzuto, Dr. Dan Gutekanst (Needham Public Schools), Lt. John Kraemer (Needham Police).

Members absent: Nadaa Ali, Kerry Hurwitch, Julie Venables, Bud Schram

Meeting started at 7:40

1. Minutes were approved from the March 21 meeting; there was no April meeting.
2. Old Business
 - It was discussed that during the community forum with the schools, there was not enough interaction between the people in the audience and the panel. The attendance of the forum was not great in terms of who came. It was agreed that there was not enough time for questions at the end. Tracy suggested that the different schools do separate events in a series, similar to this forum.
 - Race Amity Day Sunday, June 9th. Amelia talked about the idea of reaching out even more to the community and getting the community more involved. During the event, the NHRC can also help to make everything run smoothly.
 - Rapid response that would involve the police officers of the town. Groups in the town would be contacted in order to come together for incidents in the town. Prevent incidents, rather than only doing something after an incident occurs. It was discussed if the team would be made up of people from different groups that were appointed to this response team.

New Business

- New Potential Programming idea by co-chair, Christina, involving the full group and subcommittees. Potential programming and spreading responsibility in the potluck dinners, school-related equity work (upcoming HS grant, STA Day), community forums, rapid response idea, slavery task force. Our goal is to make sure we have enough people

being involved in each different committee and being able to even them out. If not committees, then we could lean towards people having more specific roles in the group in order to make sure that the work is evened out.

Reports

Needham Public Schools: Dr. Gutekanst talked about the new policies/practices that has been created for the Needham Public Schools in order to deal with incidents of hate in the schools. A new way of handling incidents has been put together and sent out to the public via their website. New training for resource officers in the schools to better interact with students and their families.

Town Issues/Needham Police: The NHRC thanked Lt. Kraemer for his many years of service to Needham, and the NHRC in particular. The NHRC wishes him much luck in his next chapter.

Adjournment at 9:20