

NEEDHAM HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 15, 2020

Amelia Klein, acting chair, called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM virtually on Zoom.

Committee members in attendance: Jennifer Howard Schroeder, Amelia Klein, Ashok Mehta, Marlene Schultz, Julie Venables, Marcus Nelson

High School liaisons: Jared Pizzuto, Sophia Dedek

Town of Needham liaison: Katie King, Assistant Town Manager

Police liaison: Lt. Belinda Carroll

Not in attendance: Cynthia Ganung, Tina Burgos, Bud Schram, Kerry Hurwitch,

OPENING & ROLL CALL Amelia Klein called the meeting to order, reviewing the suspended open meeting laws and public participation rules via Zoom meeting.

1. **APPROVAL OF September MINUTES** The minutes were approved as presented.
2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** Julie Reich and Fernanda Pinto discussed a petition to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. They are working with a sub-committee from NDI to make a change in the town and in the Needham Public Schools. Fernanda has proposed the idea to the Select Board and has asked to present it to the School Committee. Julie reached out to Indigenous Day Massachusetts and they are doing a break out session at the NDI Summit to bring further awareness to the community. The Select Board has asked for further information before they consider the change. Amelia, Cynthia and Marcus are interested in working with them. Marlene supports the petition and will help to get signatures for a citizen's petition.
3. **OLD BUSINESS**

Needham Public Library Book discussion group Jen reported that there will be only 2 books this year because it was felt that there were many other programs and book discussions scheduled in the community focusing on diversity. The books are:

January: *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones,

April: *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From* by Jennifer De Leon.

NUARI We discussed what we thought the priorities should be based on the document that was generated from the listening session in July. Items that we would like Jen and Marcus to take to the NUARI Working Group meeting are:

#1 Establish a complaint process

#4 Empower NHRC to serve as a repository for complaints to be heard, validated and acted upon

#13 Provide NHRC with funds
#63 Do a town equity audit

We also need to review and update the NHRC charge and mission

EJN Noah Mertz followed up with us after his presentation at our meeting last month. He asked if we might help them move forward with putting up placards in town. There is an effort going on at the high school. Sophia and Jared volunteered to work on it.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Website Sandy Cincotta has updated our webpage. We should look at it and see if there is anything else we think should be added and let Amelia know.

40B Housing Guidelines Dan Matthews asked for our feedback on the document that was distributed. After discussion it was decided that a subcommittee (Marlene, Marcus and Amelia) would review it and write a statement to be sent to the Select Board viewing it from a human rights perspective.

Video Production for NPS students In response to zoom racial incidents at the middle school we thought it would be great to put together an educational video geared to students. Sophia and Jared will work on doing so. It was suggested that Kerry would be a good resource to help them based on her expertise.

Needham Resilience and Response Network. Marlene Schultz shared that the Over Zero training is going to be held 3 days in November. All committee members should have received an invitation to participate in the workshops. The general category list of those invited was shared.

6. REPORTS

None.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

At My Neighbors Table series
Oct. 18, 2020: *What Kind of Communities Do We Want to Live In?*
Examining housing policies through the lens of equity. 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Coffee Hour with Needham Housing Authority
Mon. Oct. 19, 2:00 pm (Zoom) Sponsored by *Center at the Heights*

Needham Diversity Summit:

Nov. 15, 2020: *HATE HAS NO HOME HERE - Beyond the Yard Signs*
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. (Zoom)

Meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted, Marlene Schultz (Recorder)

NEXT MEETING: November 19, 2020