

Needham Unite Against Racism Working Group

6:00 p.m. February 8, 2021 Via Zoom

Agenda

Under Governor Baker's emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, S20", issued March 12, 2020 and in effect until termination of the emergency, meetings of public bodies may be conducted virtually provided that adequate access is provided to the public.

To listen and view this virtual meeting on a phone, computer, laptop, or tablet, download the "Zoom Cloud Meeting" app in any app store or at www.zoom.us. At the above date and time, click on "Join a Meeting" and enter the meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88591891041>.

1. Complete and Vote on Vision Statement & Guiding Principles, as appropriate
2. Discussion about Work Plan

February 22nd – Overview of Zoning and Housing Policy

March 8th – Town Staff DEI Efforts – Rachel Glisper, Director of Human Resources & Alex M. McNeil, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Boards & Committees

March 15th – Law Enforcement 2: Update on Police Reform Law, Tidwell Report, and any questions submitted by the working group members (*additional meeting*)

March 22nd – Community Interactions; Discussion on report to 2021 Annual Town Meeting; possible discussion about WG Charge Item 2: How to engage BIPOC residents and others who have been marginalized due to their race or ethnicity; possible discussion about WG Charge Item 3: Communication structures to ensure the sustainability and accountability of the Initiative

April 5th – Public listening session Review of Working Group recommendations to date

April 12th – Final review & approval of report to Town Meeting

May & June – Next Steps

A racial Equity Statement for the town of Needham...

Needham will be a community free of racism, racial bias, prejudice and discrimination. Our residents, schools, businesses, organizations and government will work together to identify barriers to racial equity and create solutions, opportunities, resources and support for removing them.

- We will work collaboratively and democratically toward a just, equitable, antiracist community.
- We will work to identify and change current policies, procedures, practices, and cultural norms in Needham that prevent meaningful access to opportunities because of race.
- We will create opportunities for the community to confront unpleasant truths and seek solutions that always amplify values of racial equity.
- We will intentionally create spaces for respectful dialogue and difficult conversations toward racial amity.
- We will actively engage with those who feel the impact of racism most directly, seeking their input, guidance, and honoring the wisdom of their experience.
- We will commit as individuals to be intentional in our efforts to learn and practice anti-bias and antiracism, transforming our thinking, attitudes and behaviors.

Guiding Principles:

1. Racial equity in Needham means that the experiences of people of color are the same as those of the white majority - from day to day interactions, housing opportunities, interactions with the police and other first responders, employment, and educational opportunities, etc.
 - a. People of color will see those who look like you in the leadership roles in government, business, the school system, and civic groups.
 - b. Students young and old have opportunities to learn a more complete version of American history and its relevance to today's challenges.
 - c. Students in schools will experience discipline administered fairly and justly for everyone.
 - d. People of color will not be disproportionately represented in the number of traffic stops and citations
 - e. All races would want to live here - Needham would be a desirable community for everyone.

2. Needham will be a town where the color of your skin does not dictate your experiences and there is a united front against racial injustice.
 - a. All races are accepted, welcomed, able to succeed - certainly not blocked from opportunity.
 - b. The color of your skin does not lead others to make assumptions about you.
 - c. Residents will feel safe and validated and there is accountability in all processes.
 - d. The voices of people of color will be amplified honoring their experiences without invalidation or discrediting due to a majority white experience.

3. A healthy and equitable community recognizes the harm created by implicit bias, intolerance and racism and strives to embrace diversity and inclusion by using a racial equity lens to promote anti-racist behaviors and attitudes in all aspects of civic and inter-personal living.

4. We value lifelong/ongoing self and group learning and critical social analysis to acknowledge and to further understand the dominance of white culture and privilege throughout US history, and the importance of disrupting racial structures that perpetuate it.

5. Becoming anti racist means that we must tackle our own implicit bias, intolerance and discriminatory lenses - thus, bringing about restorative justice, healing and reconciliation to truly bring together the community we live in.

Supporting the following intentional practices will help Needham realize the vision for racial equity:

- *Self-education to have a better understanding of and be more informed about race, racism, racial equity, race amity, and race relations.*
- *Foster safe environments for, and listen to residents who are, directly affected by racism and racial inequities.*
- *Engage in meaningful and productive conversations on racial issues with town/community members.*
- *Support services, materials, expertise, scholarships, and organizations that advocate for racial equity.*
- *Stand up, speak out, and act against racism and racial injustice.*
- *Encourage vision, transformation and advocacy anchored in democratic action.*
- *Encourage and build public understanding of the need to eliminate racial injustice.*