

NEEDHAM HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2021

7:30pm meeting

Chair: Tina Burgos

Recorders: Sophia Dedek and Jared Pizzuto

In attendance: Bud Schram, Tina Burgos, Sophia Dedek, Jared Pizzuto, Marlene Schultz, Cynthia Ganung, Julie Venables, Jen Howard Schroeder, Amelia Klein, Marcus Nelson

Absent: Kerry Hurwitch, Ashook Mehta and Lt. Belinda Carroll not participating tonight

Approval of Minutes: March 18, 2021: Minutes Approved

Public participation: 2 members of public watching

- **Discrimination Complaint Process**

(Tina, Marlene, Julie) Tina spoke with Matt Borelli and Moe Handel about this process and got a buy-in so that Tina, Marlene and Julie can now move forward with this process. First meeting was last week and the timeframe for getting it done would be 10-12 weeks, in order to gather more information and include everything.

Marlene talked about a flowchart that she had seen from the Town of Lexington to show the complaint process starting with Fact Finding to Remediation and she also reached out to the town of Arlington. We do not have a rapid response system and we need to do more/better fact finding. This will need input from the Select Board and town counsel.

Tina talked about Conciliation v. mediation. We currently do not have enough resources for mediation, and we should cut off the process on our end at the mediation part. Julie talked about her research regarding the intake forms and how the conciliation and mediation forms are similar. It is easy to understand the broad category of discrimination, as well as the specific details of the events, but it is also important to include how people want something resolved. Sometimes people are content in just being heard. It is important to know from the beginning if someone requires more resources to get something worked out. How much of our resources we can give?

Tina mentioned that NHRC has a very minimal interaction and support with the Needham Police. The Discrimination Complaint Process won't be successful without police participation. It was suggested by Bud to reach out to Needham Police Chief John Schlittler to help with this process. Amelia, Cynthia and Marlene will talk to John. In other towns the human rights committees/commissions work closely with the police and often get issues funneled to them directly from the Police.

Cynthia: In Natick, the chief of police is someone who initiated some action from their freedom team. He met regularly with them and was involved with their process. It is important to have community connection with the police.

Marlene discussed the difference between: Conciliation to try to get the parties (complainant and respondent) together to work it out. IF that doesn't work out then mediation. Need to get real definitions of conciliation and mediation.

Tina said they are in the process of modeling the flow-chart, using Lexington as a reference and there is a meeting to go over the draft in about 10 days and we can go over a stronger version at the next NHRC meeting.

Jen: based off of past experience, people have had trouble affording conciliation.

Cynthia: The discrimination complaint process will take a lot of devoted concentrated work from the people involved and some town have a subgroup to work on this. In Arlington, the person that is in charge of starting the process is changed on a rotating basis..

Bud: The work done in this discrimination complaint process can be used as a recruiting tool for people to join the committee. People will be attracted to the fact that we are a dedicated and thoughtful group that wants to progress with more roles to participate in.

Marlene: Reminder that the sub-committee meetings are public.

- **Rapid Resilience and Response Network**

Katie Showed a slide deck that came out of the Countering Hate and Fostering Inclusion Workshop. The workshop had 51 participants over the three different sessions and the goal was to understand how our own social identities affect identity-based harm. Needham Resilience and Response Network: It means taking a disparate group of people and how do you coordinate quickly to provide support and reduce long lasting harms and set positive norms going forward.

Need to expand the steering committee to 15 members. Katie showed a presentation of updates to this that were driven by the workshop participation feedback. The presentation is a draft and not set in stone. Next steps: Trying to find a source for funding. NHRC needs to have a representative on the Steering committee.

Jen: suggested that the relationships will be most important to the response network. That the response network is more about the relationships than the actual end result. It is necessary that we get the people committed and involved in this.

KATIE'S PRESENTATION ATTACHED AT END OF MINUTES

- **NUARI (Jen, Marcus)**

NUARI initiative: this particular set of ideas is being put out there to get everyone in town engaged and on the same page and figure out how Needham will tackle race equity. This has been really difficult to get started. Lots of discussion about getting this moving, who will oversee, are we on the same page, how do we get more people engaged.

Jen suggested that some people are less enthusiastic about the NUARI statements because of varying levels of engagement with those subjects already. Some people are already familiar while some are not. There still is a need to keep working on how the charge of NUARI will be articulated to the community.

Katie: have gotten feedback saying we are not at the point where we are capable of making massive changes right away, and instead are in a gradual process. "We aren't going to solve racism tomorrow"

Amelia: NDI thinks that just a statement is not enough. They prefer the word "endorse" to "adopt"

Vote for **ENDORISING** the initial NUARI statement. Unanimously approved to endorse initial statement and continue conversations.

Next steps for NUARI: Meeting on April 26.

Vote regarding the election statement from HRC: Unanimously approved.

Amendment to add all members names to the statement. It will go on our website and will go to the public information officer to disseminate. Try to get this into the Metro west section of the Boston Globe.

- **Indigenous People's Day Initiative**

Amelia talked about a group of student reps (Fernanda and Nick) who came to NDI and asked for ideas and feedback for changing the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. The two students made a presentation and proposed the idea and came to the NHRC for support in making an official proposal. Katie created guidelines for the proposal. They got feedback from the committee and went to the NDI summit and got feedback from the

community, school committee and faculty by doing a survey. There will be a vote on getting it changed on the school calendar by the School Committee on April 27. Guidelines for this will come from the students working with indigenous groups. More info coming at the next meeting.

Cynthia: We are not used to the leadership of younger people, but we are making important steps forward and listening to the people who want change.

- **Reports**

Katie said town received request to rename the accessible reservoir trail behind town building in honor of Mr. David Summergrad to "Amity Path."

Amelia and Cynthia talked about the March 20, 2021 Vigil Lots of positive response to vigil. How do we get involved with demonstrations or vigils right away? Amelia said this was a perfect example for the rapid response team.

Pride Banners (Tina): Was on a call from Dan Matthews and there is a short window to get pride banners produced and put up on Chapel and Great Plain. It was approved for this to happen, but it might not happen this year due to the short window of time, but if it works it will be up in June.

Jared and Sophia talked about Needham High School: Jared mentioned teachers talking about the killing of Daunte Wright and Sophia talked about Own Your Peace day at the high school..

Marlene received an email that she received from a Needham resident about their brother being killed by police in Brookline. They felt rights were violated and wanted to see if the committee could do something to educate the community about outside people investigating police incidents. Marlene directed her to Equal Justice Needham to help. They were already in touch with the New England Innocence Project. This is something that may spark a lot of interest in the community and is something that we will leave open to talking about because we definitely could have a role in suggesting changes to internal investigations since the police investigate themselves.

Marcus: Chief of police is open to more community dialogue. Police reform bill will come out sometime in July-December. Chief is open to feedback from the community.

Tina got an inquiry from a student from Pollard about bullying. We have a responsibility to help and respond in a respectful way. These are not complaints, but concerns. We should be prepared to follow up.

Cynthia talked about the Needham area immigration task force and mentioned they wanted to get Jake Auchincloss to discuss immigration and the new administration.

Jared mentioned that the two public participants in this NHRC meeting were two Needham High School students that were interested in joining the committee for the next year.

Motion to adjourn: Meeting Adjourned at 9:22pm

- Future NHRC Meeting Dates and Recorders

May 20 - Ashok

Jun. 17 - Marcus

July and August dates have not been set.

Rapid Resilience & Response Network

Katie: (going thru a slide presentation)

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Katie: (going thru a slide presentation)

Zoom Webinar

Recording

Sophia Delek Katie King Tina Burgos Marlene Schu... Jennifer How... Bud Schram

Countering Hate & Fostering Inclusion Workshop

Co-hosted by the Select Board, the Human Rights Committee, and the Needham Diversity Initiative.

Facilitated by Project Over Zero, a non-profit organization, which “partners with community leaders, civil society, and researchers to harness the power of communication to prevent, resist and rise above identity-based violence and other forms of group-targeted harm.”

Sought to bring together diverse interests and viewpoints to identify ways we can effectively prevent and respond to incidents of hate and discrimination against those who live and work in Needham.

Postponed from March 2020 and reworked into a 3-session, online workshop held in Nov/Dec 2020.

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Zoom Webinar

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Recording

Sophia Dedek Katie King Tina Burgos Marlene Schu... Jennifer How... Bud Schram

51 workshop participants representing...

Chinese Friends of Needham	Needham Human Rights Committee	School
Council on Aging	Needham Interfaith Clergy Association	Race Equity Access and Leadership (REAL) Coalition
Immigration Justice Task Force	Needham Library	Select Board
Indian Community of Needham	Needham Police Department	SEPAC
League of Women Voters	Needham Public Schools	State Representative & Senator
LGBTQIA community	Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative	YMCA
METCO Needham Parent Council	Newton-Needham Regional Chamber	Youth & Family Services
Needham Board of Health	Office of the Town Manager	A variety of faith communities
Needham Community Council	Over Zero	...and more.
Needham Diversity Initiative	PTC - Broadmeadow Elementary School	
Needham Housing Authority resident & staff	PTC - Sunita Williams Elementary	

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Participants 12 Share Screen Raise Hand Record

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Sophia Dedek Katie King Tina Burgos Marlene Schu... Jennifer How... Bud Schram

Workshop Goals & Key Content

- Build cross-cutting relationships
- Understand the dynamics of social identities
- Learn about identity-based violence and group-targeted harm
- Assess the impact of past events and the risks for future events in Needham
- Understand & practice response communications
- Best practices and steps to forming a resilience & response network

Dr. Nichole Argo and Samantha Owens, Project Over Zero (November 2020). Countering Hate & Fostering Inclusion in Needham: Understanding and Developing Communications for Rapid Response & Resilience.

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What is a response network?

A group of community stakeholders (individuals and organizations) who come together to coordinate a rapid response to acts of identity-based violence and group-targeted harm. Goals of rapid response include:

- Supporting affected communities
- Mitigating further immediate harm
- Reducing long-lasting harms
- Setting positive social norms

Dr. Nichole Argo and Samantha Owens, Project Over Zero (November 2020). Countering Hate & Fostering Inclusion in Needham: Understanding and Developing Communications for Rapid Response & Resilience.

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Needham Resilience & Response Network Structure: Draft 1

Steering Committee:

- Town Management: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Operations, Police Chief, Public Information Officer
- Needham Diversity Initiative representatives
- Needham Human Rights Committee representatives

Additions to Steering Committee based on specifics of the incident:

- Representative(s) of the targeted group
- Relevant Town Department Manager (e.g. School Superintendent, Director of Aging Services, etc.)

[Link to Response Network Draft 1 \(Dec 2020\)](#)

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Other Major Updates in Draft 2, driven by workshop participant feedback.

✓ Added a purpose:

The Needham Resilience & Response Network ("the Network") will convene individuals and organizations to coordinate a rapid, effective response to acts of hate, bias, or discrimination experienced in the Needham community. Acting under direction of its Steering Committee, the Network will activate for incidents that have or could attract broad public attention, could escalate quickly or lead to additional harm, or have other urgent, potential repercussions for the community. The Network will be focused on the immediate work needed to support the targeted person(s) or group(s), disseminate accurate information, acting to de-escalate the conflict, and reduce division and harm in the community. The Steering Committee, with input of the Network, will make recommendations and track the progress for longer-term work needed to address the underlying causes of hate and to prevent future incidents.

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Sophia Dedek Katie King Tina Burgos Marlene Schu... Jennifer How... Bud Schram

Other Feedback: More context is needed.

How does the Network fit into an incident response continuum?

- How does the Network fit with what other organizations are already doing?
- Is the Network just responding to incidents or working to prevent future incidents?

Is the Response Network where people would file a discrimination complaint?

- What is the threshold of an event that would warrant a response by the Network?

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Recording

Sophila Detlefs
Katie King
Tina Burgos
Marlene Schu...
Jennifer How...
Bud Schram

Incident Response Continuum

Preventative Work.

Ongoing efforts to address underlying causes of bias, harm, and discrimination happening throughout Needham by a variety of stakeholders.

INCIDENT OCCURS: Immediate Public Safety Response.

Formal incident response, which may include Police, Fire/EMS, Public Health, Emergency Management, hospitals, and other first responders.

Community response following an incident.

Response Network goals:
1- supporting affected communities,
2- mitigating further immediate harm,
3 - reducing division & harm,
4- setting positive social norms.

Incorporating Lessons Learned.

Response Network identifies lessons learned from the incident and will make recommendations and track progress on longer-term work to address underlying causes and prevent future incidents.

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