

NEEDHAM HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Minutes May 19, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Tina Burgos at 7:35pm

In attendance: Tina Burgos, Belinda Carroll, Cynthia Ganung, Katie King, Amelia Klein, Rinaz Mala, Finn McKeon, Bud Schram, Emme Ward

Absent: Kerry Hurwitch, Jen Howard Schroeder, Marlene Schultz,

Approval of Minutes from April 28, 2022 – not available, approve at May meeting

Public participation – none. Nathaniel Hyman attending, potential member of NHRC

Community Conversations On Race (Katie/Jen/Tina)

5/17/22 second program on “Cops and Community”

“Exploring the Role and Impact of School Resource Officers,” Feedback

*On line group had an open and candid conversation. Bud

* Informative. Emphasized that the school experiences of students of color can lead to later incarceration. The presenter Mark Warren gave a lot of background information about this. Needham School Resource Officers (SRO) gave their perspective. The community should know about what they do. Amelia

*Discussion at tables gave different points of view. Cynthia

*Student members of NHRC were asked about their experience with the SRO at NHS. They see officer and dog at school. The officer seems friendly, engaging with students and would be easy to bring a concern or ask a question. Finn & Emme

*Parents were concerned about SRO carrying a weapon. Students said they didn't notice it, saw the dog with the officer. One table had officer McMann and Select Board member Marcus Nelson who shared his negative experiences when he was younger. Good to have different perspectives, explain policies. Tina

*It is good to have student perspectives, especially BIPOC students and students who are in METCO. Amelia

*Program was hybrid, 25 on line and around 40 in person. Small groups, please remind people that they do not have to speak.

Third and final event: June 13, 2022 from 7pm - 8:30pm at Powers Hall

Pride 2022 - NHRC Youth Subcommittee (Emme/Fin/Danica/Tina)

Wishing Tree – collecting messages for the tree from NHRC email list and from Needham High School, in daily bulletin. They will also ask at dinner for LGBTQ+ and allies at CATH, 5/26., 5:30pm.

The tree will be on display at Needham Town Hall and NHS. Ask the Needham Public Library. Amelia suggested recording the messages for the NHRC Face Book page.

Reading list – at the Needham Library for Pride month & Juneteenth, lists for youth and adults.

Juneteenth 2022 – NHRC will have Facebook postings, starting on June 1 as countdown to Juneteenth.

NHRC will collaborate with NDI. They can give suggestions. Jen Howard will help. The purpose of the action items is to create awareness and celebrate the holiday.

Question about a Needham group having a vigil on the Town Common

Katie King said to contact Myles Tucker when they have a date. If the Town Common is not available, then they will help find another location.

Race Amity Day – June 12, 4-6pm, co-sponsored with NDI.

Proposed location – Amity Path, by Reservoir, Dedham Ave/

Tina reported there was a problem about getting permission to use this location. They found out that the Select Board needs to approve, it will be considered at the May 24 SB meeting.

Amelia. This year the Race Amity Day observance will be more informal and interactive, with some simultaneous events - not just listen to talks. There will be refreshments, music with a band and a group of gospel singers, rock painting, done with parents (materials provided). The rocks can be placed on the trail or used as a gift. The music will start at 4pm. 4:30pm will be a welcome. They want someone from NHRC to speak. Rinaz was suggested.

NHRC members are asked to help with the set up and clean up. There will be a tent.

Select Board on long-term goal setting. Feedback

Reviewed the initiatives set by the town for two years. They are guidelines for the Town Manager and not all inclusive, In July, 2022 the Select Board will update it for 2023 & 2024.

Tina read: *GOAL #4: Healthy and Socially Thriving – Needham residents enjoy high levels of physical and mental well-being and abundant recreational, cultural and educational opportunities in an environment where human rights are respected, diversity is celebrated, and neighbors feel connected.*

Needham:

- *Cultivates a wide range of recreational, cultural, educational, civic and social opportunities for all socioeconomic and age groups.*
- *Supports the physical and mental well-being of its community members.*
- *Fosters inclusion, diversity and equity.*
- *Promotes the installation of art and opportunities for community-led art projects.*

Comments. Bud – They have added things that NHRC is doing.

Cynthia – consider including advocating and vigils when there are incidents of discrimination and violation of human rights.

Katie – these need to be actionable items. They relook at it every 6/12 months.

What is happening with the group that was looking into the history of slavery? 4.12 “Gather information about appropriate acknowledgement of the history of slavery in Needham; ask HRC if this is something that they can take the lead on.”

Cynthia has some connection with this group which is led by members of First Parish. Maybe we could invite a representative from this group to attend the NHRC meeting.

Members are asked to look at the list to see if there are any actionable items to ask the SB to add or remove. Bring these recommendations to the June NHRC meeting

Annual Report and Group Photo -Annual report is available, Thank you to Amelia.

We will postpone the group photo to the June meeting.

Needham Resilience Network (Cynthia/Tina)

Cynthia – May monthly meetings of NRN. Continue to develop relationships in network, learn skills - understanding/persuading and different levels of listening. Learn about different members of the network. Sandy Robinson - Needham Community Council and Ramin Abrishamian – NUARI.

Tina – the monthly NRN newsletter will soon be able to be shared. NRN will have a website, as part of the new NDI website.

Annual Report for the future. Amelia agreed to continue preparing the NHRC report and she will not be a recorder for the year.

Multicultural Festival – Rinaz

Planning meeting, event will be in the fall.

Announcement:

June 11, 2pm – Students Advocate for Change – Powers Hall

Needham High School Civics Showcase – presentations by students, sponsored by League of Women Voters of Needham.

Recorder: Cynthia Ganung