



## Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release

Office of the Town Manager  
Town Hall, 1471 Highland Ave, Needham, MA 02492

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

### CONTACT

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## **Public Invited to Participate in Discussion Series ‘Connections: Cops & Community’**

*Three-part series to focus on policing in the community*

NEEDHAM – Tuesday, February 15, 2022 – A coalition of Town leaders are inviting community members to join Connections: Cops & Community, a three-part discussion series that will delve into policing in Needham and help foster greater understanding and dialogue between police and the community.

The series aims to engage community members in conversations around race, diversity, equity, and inclusion, a key recommendation from the Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative (NUARI). The NUARI Working Group identified policing as a priority area of focus. Participants organizing these events include members of the Select Board, Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative Working Group (NUARI), Human Rights Committee, Needham Diversity Initiative, Needham Police Department, Needham Public Schools, the Interfaith Clergy Association and Town leadership.

The first event, “History of Policing: Then and Now” is designed to educate the community about how the Needham Police Department is structured and its operations. This conversation is intended to provide important background information on policing so that participants have information they need for more robust dialogue in the second two conversations. Cops and Community will feature three panelists: Needham Police Officer Anthony Frongillo, who will cover the history of policing in the United States; Gloria Greis, Executive Director, Needham History Center & Museum, who will cover the history of policing in Needham; and Police Chief John Schlittler, who will discuss current policing in Needham. The discussion will be moderated by Needham resident [Chad Williams](#), Professor of History and African and African American Studies at Brandeis University.

Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the 90-minute presentation.

The second event will focus on NPD’s philosophy, partnerships, and approach to working with youth. This panel discussion will include perspectives from school resource officers, school officials, and public health professionals on the opportunities to create and maintain positive relationships between young people and the police. This session will also include question and answer time.

The third session of the series will be driven by the community, expanding on issues covered in earlier conversations, exploring the relationship between law enforcement and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and discussing issues around policing that are most urgent in the public's mind. Participants in the first two sessions and community members will be asked to provide feedback on topics of interest to help shape this third session.

Connections: Cops & Community is just one way the Town is working to ensure that Needham is a welcoming and inclusive community. The Select Board has adopted a vision statement for racial equity in Needham. Various Town Boards and Committees are partnering with NUARI to identify ways they can apply this vision to their work.

Please note: Each event will be held in person unless it is determined that it is not safe to do so. These conversations are intended to create and foster meaningful relationships and dialogue and the hosts believe in-person discussion is best suited to achieve that goal. The Town will make a recording of each session available on its website.

For questions or suggested topics/issues to be discussed, please email [kking@needhamma.gov](mailto:kking@needhamma.gov) with the subject line "Connections: Cops and Community."

**\*\*\* To register for the series, please fill out this [registration form](#). \*\*\*** While registration is not required, it is helpful for planning purposes.

### **Connections: Cops and Community Event Details**

History of Policing: Then and Now

Tuesday, March 1

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Center at the Heights, 300 Hillside Avenue

Youth & Police Panel Discussion

Tuesday, April 5

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Center at the Heights, 300 Hillside Avenue

Community Conversation

Tuesday, May 17

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Center at the Heights, 300 Hillside Avenue

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