

## **Wakefield Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes 11/17/2020**

Call to order: 7:05pm

Present members of HRC:

Sherri Oken

Maria Muti

Benny Wheat

Jennifer Boettcher

Amy Rando

Jeremy Little

Kimberley Ring

Elizabeth Assenza

Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez

Nicole Jacob

Absent:

Superintendent Doug Lyons, ex officio

Town Administrator Steve Maio, ex officio

Chief Skory, ex officio

Faith Defendre

Also Present:

Mehreen Butt, Town Council Liaison

Colleen Guida, School Committee Liaison

Yana Herzog, Youth Council Liaison

Joe Gallagher, member of the public

Sara Teague, member of the public

Public participation (Participants will be limited to 3 minutes each)

- Sara Teague from Lynnfield, observing as they work to set up an HRC in their town
- Joe Gallagher from Lynnfield, observing as they work to set up an HRC in their town

Approval of minutes from October 20, 2020 meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from our October 20, 2020 meeting: unanimously approved

Vision and Values HRC representative

- The town council wants a member of each board/committee/commission in town to help in the town's process for revising their vision and values.

- Do we as a board have the opportunity to give feedback and review, or is it just the liaison?
  - There is a public comment and input process, anyone can participate in that
  - We can ask whomever of us ends up serving as the liaison bring the info back to us for discussion
- Kim volunteers.

Motion for Kim to be our representative from the HRC in the towns Vision and Values process: unanimously approved

#### Anti-racism action updates:

##### MLK and CSK Event subcommittee

- Subcommittee has met once
- Working on making a theme, we'll finalize it in our next meeting, after Thanksgiving
- We've been coming up with ideas for how to adapt for a remote event
  - Service project: instead of an in-person project, we hope to put out a call to service encouraging people to get involved and volunteer around town. We're compiling a list of organizations that are taking volunteers. We can have a hashtag and encourage people to take pictures/videos of their service and post with the hashtag
  - Scavenger hunt: an activity for families to learn more about civil rights history in town
  - The actual event on the day-of will be virtual
  - Awards ceremony could maybe be, instead of speeches, a recorded conversation along the lines of "how did you get involved in this service? What keeps you involved?" etc.
- If anyone has ideas for organizations that we could contact about volunteering, please send them along to anyone on the planning subcommittee (Benny, Faith, Jeremy, Nicole, Teresa)

##### Black student union

- Hopefully between now and next month's HRC meeting Maria, Faith, and Glavia Smith from Metco will have had a meeting and Maria will likely invite Glavia to our next meeting.

##### Youth council

- The Youth Council made a presentation to the School Committee about WMHS's Native mascot with a recommendation to change the mascot.
- The presentation was so great, really thorough, well researched.

- If you want to watch it:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5cCvO3aj\\_Q&list=PL\\_44b0NMpmY6o4\\_4qa6Sdgx157mljCRDO&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5cCvO3aj_Q&list=PL_44b0NMpmY6o4_4qa6Sdgx157mljCRDO&index=2) Starts at about the 36 min mark

#### Library collaboration- Commit to Your Community event

- The Library got a grant to do a series of events revolving around the idea that building compassion can strengthen the community
- As part of this series they are hoping to co-host an event with the HRC revolving around issues of homelessness.
- Maria will email the Library to connect them with Benny, who works in the field of homeless services.
- Amy can also contact someone from the Eliot PATH team and connect them with the Library staff who are planning this event.

#### Active bystander training with Quabbin Mediation- schedule date

- Maria contacted Quabbin Mediation and we are on the roster to have an active bystander training from them.
- Maria will send an email to the whole group to work on choosing a date

#### Chair's comments:

##### Central electronic storage for HRC documents

- Electronic storage for the HRC's documents is still a work in progress. The Town's IT department is working on a couple of options for us.

#### Book readings for the upcoming year

- We could continue the practice of having children's book readings for different events or months (as we did for Pride and for Indigenous People's Day)
  - There are all sorts of things we can do in this format, it would fill any gaps we have between our other programs
  - If we make a habit of doing these events it could be something people know about and look forward to
  - A caution: we should think about who is in our community and be aware and cautious about celebrating things that do not belong to us (such as religious festivals or traditions). Although part of our mission educating people about things that they're not familiar with, we have to walk a fine line between education and misappropriation
  - It would be good to reach out to the community inviting people to share and help choose books and do readings in celebrating different histories/cultures/etc.

#### Matters not anticipated

- We have Yana's beautiful artwork ready to be posted, but we don't have a plan about distributing them. The Chamber of Commerce isn't meeting in person, but we could just go to prominent downtown businesses to distribute them.
- To do this we'll need to make some high-quality copies to distribute. Maria and Sherri will touch base about the logistics of this offline
- The town has hired a Community and Economic Development Manager, she started this week. She is someone we could work with on matters like this. Her name is Erin Kokinda

#### Action Items:

- Maria will send an email to the whole group to work on choosing a date for the active bystander training
- Maria and Sherri will touch base offline about the logistics of printing Yana's artwork
- Maria will email the Library to connect them with Benny, who works in the field of homeless services.
- Amy can also contact someone from the Eliot PATH team and connect them with the Library staff who are planning this event.

#### New member orientation

#### Adjourn

Roll call vote on motion to adjourn: unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned 8:27pm