



**Wakefield Human Rights Commission
June 15, 2021 Meeting (virtual)**

Voting Members Present: Elizabeth Assenza, Lindsay Averbrook, Nicole Jacob, Jeremy Little, Maria Muti, Sherri Oken, Benny Wheat

Non-voting Members Present: Yana Herzog, Amy Rando

Absent: Stephen Ingalls, Eileen Rooney, Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez, Daniela Nedbalek

Also absent: Superintendent Doug Lyons, ex officio; Town Administrator Steve Maio, ex officio; Chief Skory, ex officio

Public participant: Daniel Leber

Guest Speaker: Tom Mullen, Wakefield Town Counsel (Left meeting 7:56 p.m.)

Please note action items in red.

1. Opening remarks
 - a. Call to order at 7:04 p.m.
 - b. This meeting is being recorded.
 - c. Close captions are on. If someone is speaking, the audio may be garbled.
2. Public participation
 - a. Daniel Leber thanked the HRC for the work that it has done, indicating that it is needed and much appreciated.
 - b. Attorney Mullen responded to his question about the Open Meeting Law's requirement for an in person component.
 - i. When tonight's meeting was scheduled it was assumed that long pending legislation relative to virtual and hybrid meetings would have become law. That is not the case.
 - ii. The legislation has been agreed to by House and Senate and is likely to be signed Governor within days.
 - iii. It will allow any meeting that extends the opportunity for remote meetings after the end of the Governor's emergency order through next year. He noted that if there is a complaint about a meeting being only virtual, we may have to redo that meeting in person.
 - iv. He recommended that we hold off on any weighty votes at this meeting until legislation is formalized.
3. Presentation on Open Meeting Law
 - a. Town Counsel Tom Mullen provided a review of the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.¹
 - b. He responded to questions from WHRC members, providing clarification.
 - i. Planning logistics relative to meeting amenities (ex. refreshments, location) do not have to be publicly posted.
 - ii. If 3-4 people are meeting, by invitation, with a private Town group such as UU Church social action group, the meeting does not need to be posted if we will not discuss matters within our jurisdiction.
 - iii. A formally designated subcommittee of the WHRC must post notice of their meetings whenever they meet and keep minutes.
 - iv. A quorum of a public body cannot serve as a subcommittee. WHRC limits subcommittees to 5 members.

¹ All Commissioners and Town employees must complete an online training and a handout of the law has been distributed to new commissioners.

- v. A separate committee formed to run an event that includes both HRC members and members of another body created by the Town with definite members and a public purpose, must post notices and keep minutes.
 - vi. Emergency meetings are allowed without 48 hour notice but it truly must be an emergency.
 - vii. He reiterated that we are considered municipal employees and must adhere to the same regulations.
 - viii. If there is no quorum, the meeting must vote to adjourn to a definite date, time and place.
 - ix. Should we respond to Facebook comments antithetical to our mission?
Would this be considered deliberation? No, if just one member rebuts an offensive statement, but avoid any appearance of signaling to others who are part of your body to begin a deliberation.
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a. May 18, 2021 Commission Meeting
 - i. There were no changes to the meeting minutes.
 - ii. A motion was made to accept the minutes of the May 18, 2021 minutes as presented. It was seconded and all voted in favor
 - b. Pride Committee Meeting
Not enough people from the Pride Committee were present to vote on the minutes.
 - c. Communications Subcommittee
No meetings were held in the past month requiring minutes to be approved.
 5. Pride Committee Update
 - a. The Flag raising event at the Americal Center was well attended.
 - b. Daniele has been posting profiles of prominent LGBTQ individuals on our Facebook page.
 - c. The Library has provided a list of notable books for us to post.
 - d. Instead of holding a separate event in Wakefield, we will tag on to the North Shore Pride, Saturday, June 26th major event

Action Item: Sherri awaiting details and sources of information on this event from Eileen.

 - e. In the works – picture book readings
 - i. They will be recorded using Zoom then sent to the WHRC chair to post.
 - ii. Whenever doing readings, be sure to ask for publisher permission.
 6. Communications Committee Update
 - a. Action Item: Sherri will prepare and share the promotions resources guide by our next meeting.
 - b. Action Item: Maria will work with Jen Boettcher on finalizing our history for posting.
 - c. Positive Messaging Posters designed by Yana Herzog
 - i. Sherri is preparing and will and distribute the third in the series of four, throughout Wakefield, at the beginning of July.
 - ii. Should we continue the messaging poster campaign after this year?
 - We will consider as the year progresses.
 - If continued, the HRC should assist Yana in developing the messages.
 7. Youth Council
 - a. The Council discussed trying to recruit new members by the end of June, and will continue meeting during the summer.
 - b. They would like to get involved with ensuring there are more diverse books in the school library.
 8. Wakefield Juneteenth
 - a. The event was well attended despite the rain.
 - b. ROTC helped to raise the flag.
 - c. We had moving speakers and the singing of the Juneteenth anthem.
 - d. Should we join the North Shore Juneteenth Association?
 - i. \$186.50 to be an organizational member; \$18.65 for individual memberships.
 - ii. Table a vote on whether to join until our July meeting.

Action Item: All HRC members should review what they do. <https://www.facebook.com/nsjuneteenth/>
 9. Active Bystander Training

- a. One of the most recent weeknight sessions wasn't fully subscribed but there were enough people to have the session. One session did not have enough registrants and was cancelled. We do have the option to reschedule.
- b. We need to improve marketing.
Sherri, who completed training to be an ABT facilitator, is willing to write about the program to promote it.
- c. Should we plan the session for a summer weekday or wait until fall?
The consensus was that it would be better to wait until fall.
- d. Training money would come out of this year's line item budget or would have to come from the revolving budget. Funding is not affected by fact we voted in the prior fiscal year.

Action Item: Benny to check availability of a session for the fall.

10. Hate Has no Home Here (HHHH)

- a. The signs are currently stored at Maria's home.
- b. We will sell them at the Farmers Market or online and deliver to customers.

Action Item: Post availability of signs on Facebook

Action Item: Sherri Oken to post availability of signs on Patch.²

- a. Money is deposited in our revolving account so we do not have to go before Town Council.
- b. We have 105 signs.

11. Tabling at Farmer's Market

- a. We need another volunteer for the 12 - 1 p.m. shift.

Action Items:

- We must be set up by 8:45 a.m.
- Maria will bring HHHH signs, Juneteenth material, Pride swag and other display materials.
- Nicole will bring a folding table.
- Jeremy will bring a 12 x 12 pop up.
- Benny to locate our table cloth, break down the table at 1 p.m., give the income to Sherri for deposit by Sherri Dalton
- b. The HRC members will review material on mental health issues provided by Lindsay to determine if appropriate for future displays.

12. Festival by the Lake

- a. It will be held on Saturday, October 2nd.
- b. A motion was made that the WHRC should have a table at Festival by the Lake. The motion was seconded and all voted in favor.

13. Physical Storage Space

- a. Steve Maio asked how much we need to store, and once he knows how much, space can be arranged in Town Hall.
- b. If the space is in Town Hall, we must be mindful of their schedule.

Action Item: Maria will ascertain how much space we need and coordinate with Steve Maio.

14. Networking with other HRCs

Action Item: Maria Muti and Jeremy will have a report for our next meeting.

- a. There will be a live forum of social justice and human rights groups in the Stoneham Senior Center on Monday, June 28th at 11 a.m.
- b. At this time, no one is available to attend but if you can, please contact Benny.

15. Chair's Comments

- a. We received an email from Doug Lyons and Amy McCloud that they have selected a student representative to the HRC.
- b. Emmanuella Partyka (Emma), a rising Senior at Wakefield HS, will be our new student member.
- c. If she can get sworn in, she can join our next meeting as a voting member.

16. Matters not anticipated

² Press releases also were sent to The Item and The Observer.

- a. Nicole suggested that a few times a year, it would be helpful to have different groups come to our meetings and provide information about their areas of concern and lived expertise.
 - i. This would serve as a continuation of our learning as well as information for members of the public who attend, and help us be more prepared to serve (examples of topics, issues include indigenous people, AAPI, mental health, disability issues, immigration).
 - ii. It will increase our interaction with other town groups to build more connections and collaborations.
- b. A suggestion was made to form a WHRC networking subcommittee to identify groups, build a model for going forward, and develop a schedule.
 - i. Would networking with other HRCs be part of this? It was generally agreed that this is a separate initiative.

Action Item: Lindsay, Maria and Nicole are the members and will hold a meeting.

- ii. Others who may want to participate (maximum 5 commissioners) should contact Benny.
- c. \$250 Grant
 - i. We have received a grant for a partnership with the Black Student Union (BSU) to provide educational and social justice programming.

Action Item: Maria to share emailed notification from Pina and Glavia.

- ii. Juneteenth picnic, hosted by the Black Student Union, will be held this Thursday, from 3:30 – 5:30, and is open to all .
- d. Future Meetings
 - We agreed to meet during both July and August. We must have a quorum in order to meet live.

Action Item: Benny to check if we can book live meetings in Town Hall next month and going forward.

A motion was made to adjourn. It was seconded and all voted in favor.

Adjourn 9:23 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sherri Oken