



**WHRC Meeting  
September 21, 2021 by Zoom**

*Present:* Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez, Elizabeth Assenza, Nicole Jacob (log off 8:40), Maria Mutti (log on at 8 p.m.), Daniela Nedbalek, Sherri Oken, Benny Wheat  
*Absent Commissioners:* Lindsay Averbook, Jeremy Little, Emma Partyka, Eileen Rooney  
*Liaisons Present:* Yana Herzog, Youth Council; (new) Levonne Coughlin/ Commission on Disability Issues  
*Public Present:* LeighAnne Taylor, Daniel Lieber

I. "Housekeeping"

- Call to order 7:06 p.m.
- Roll Call
- We are being recorded.
- Close captioning is available.
- Check in question: If your mood was the weather, what weather would it be?

II. Public Participation

A. LeighAnne Taylor

1. She works for Winchester Hospital's whose service area includes Wakefield.
2. They are in the midst of their community health needs assessment for the 9 towns in their service area.
3. They collaborate with the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital.
4. They would like to interview WHRC members to learn about the needs of Wakefield regarding health, quality of life and much more.
5. Responses will be confidential.

**ACTION ITEM** She will send an email to Benny, to share with our group, to ascertain who would be willing to be interviewed.

B. Levonne Coughlin – Liaison to the Commission on Disability Issues

1. She will try to attend our meetings and will invite us to the Commission on Disability Issues meetings on the first Monday of each month.
2. They advise and assist the town to make sure they are in compliance with federal and state laws, and provide referrals and advocacy.
3. Their goal is to be more visible and provide education.
4. They work on ensuring accessibility, enhancing mobility, providing affordable housing for those who are disabled.
5. They are currently working with the MBTA to create accessibility to the train.
6. Suggestion: Connect with "I am able", a group which advises on business operations and strategic initiatives to be more accommodating to people with both seen and not seen disabilities.
7. What could the WHRC do to be a good partner?
  - a. WHRC Liaison to their Commission
  - b. Collaborate with them on our "language of diversity" initiative.

**ACTION ITEM** Benny Wheat attend the Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> Commission on Disability Issues.

C. Daniel Lieber

1. He is working with legislators and the Town on increasing accessibility at Town Meeting.
  - a. The Town did not create effective (if any) accommodations for the past several meetings, and he has requested full accommodations for the November Town meeting.
  - b. Town and state legislators must hear from multiple voices on the significance of this issue.
  - c. The ability to participate in Town Meeting is a human right for all citizens.
  - d. No public transportation is available to the field house and the field house site itself is not accessible.
2. How the WHRC can help?
  - a. Contact the Town Council and submit an editorial to raise public awareness of this issue.
  - b. Perhaps submit a warrant to the Town.
  - c. A motion was made for the WHRC chair to draft a communication to the Town Council regarding accessibility issues relative to the Town Meeting, with copies sent to Tom Mullen, Town Counsel, and Bill Renault, ADA coordinator for the Town. All voted in favor.
  - d. The Commission on Disability Issues will draft an editorial, using our Chair's letter, that we can co-sign.

**ACTION ITEM** Benny Wheat will draft a communication.

### III. Approval of 2021 Minutes

- A. A motion was made to accept the August 17<sup>th</sup> WHRC general meeting minutes. All voted in favor.
- B. A motion was made to accept the Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Indigenous People SubCommittee meeting minutes. All voted in favor.
- C. A motion was made to accept the Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> Hispanic Heritage SubCommittee meeting minutes. All voted in favor.

### IV. WHRC Social Media Proposal

- A. Goals
  1. To enhance relationships with community members
  2. To promote learning
  3. To intervene in instances of harm to show solidarity with marginalized people and communities.
- B. Discussion
  1. We should only respond to comments on our page or something we have posted on other group's pages on which we post.
  2. Suggestion: Add to proposal that "Members of the WHRC will not respond to posts, speaking as the WHRC, if the original post was not from the WHRC".
  3. Our policies and procedures are now under the purview of the Town.
  4. Table discussion on who will respond, the nature of our responses, and whether to create some boilerplate language.

**ACTION ITEM:** Benny Wheat will integrate suggestions into the proposal and speak with Tom Mullen on whether we can adopt a policy on our own.

### V. Indigenous Peoples SubCommittee

- A. Activities
  1. They will have some book readings.

2. They may involve someone from the Bayrd family.
3. We may join with the Italian Americans who are in support of IPD.
4. We will provide suggested reading lists.

**ACTION ITEM:** Benny will resend to the Commissioners the statement we sent last year, with some revisions, to again promote the State legislative agenda which we endorsed last year to the school committee chair.

B. Future possibilities:

1. Land Acknowledgment – Create a formal statement from the Town that indicates they are aware that we are on tribal land.
2. Provide insights into Native American imagery.

C. Discussion

1. A student dressed as a "native American" at a recent Wakefield HS football game.
2. It is not our role to call out an individual student.
3. Is there a school dress code that would address this behavior?

**ACTION ITEM:** Review the Mass. Legislative agenda item on use of indigenous people imagery at the next WHRC meeting.

VI. Hispanic Heritage Month

A. The Situation

1. We don't have enough time to plan an ambitious event as was originally hoped.
2. The Town requires 90 days to review requests to have an event at the Gazebo.
3. Food trucks require minimum guaranteed receipts as well as parking, access to electricity, tables, lighting, etc.
4. There are people who are willing to fund the entertainment for us this year.
5. We have created posts for our Facebook page and will create more.
6. We are working on having a performance at the Library, either on the Plaza or in the Gold Room.
7. The Committee is meeting again this week to finalize details.

**ACTION ITEM** Sherri Oken write more postings for our Facebook page and promote the event when details are finalized.

B. Looking Ahead

1. In the future, apply for a cultural grant to fund entertainment.
2. Start planning in the late spring.

**ACTION ITEM** Maria Muti will check with Tom Mullen and Steve Maio about accepting donations to cover the cost of the entertainment (Veronica Roblas's band and Charlie)

VII. Festival by the Lake

A. Basics

1. October 2nd, rain date October 3rd
2. 10 – 4 PM. but will need to get their earlier to set up our table.

**ACTION ITEM:** Benny will distribute a sign up sheet for staffing our table.

B. Suggestions for Display:

1. Sell "Hate has no home here" signs.
2. Display poster board and flags commemorating Hispanic Heritage month.
3. Create something interactive to attract people
  - a. Sherri has a handmade Jeopardy game that can be converted to Human Rights Jeopardy.
  - b. We need 4 Categories with 5 questions each – ex. the HRC, active bystanders, MLK, women's rights, etc.

- c. Motion: Buy additional WHRC buttons to award to Jeopardy contestants. All voted in favor.

**ACTION ITEM:** Maria Muti will place an order for WHRC buttons.

**ACTION ITEM:** All are asked to suggest Jeopardy categories and send questions/answers to Sherri who will revise her handmade Jeopardy game into a Human Rights Jeopardy.

#### VIII. Training Active Bystanders

October 6, 2021

#### IX. Event planning and promotion templates

##### A. Evolving document

1. It is quite comprehensive and was created with input on subcommittee planning for several past events, but there is still quite a lot that should be added.
2. We need to add requirements (ex. advance notice, application, cost) to reserve town space (gazebo, schools, Library, etc.) and who we must contact.

**ACTION ITEM** All are asked to send additions and corrections to this document so that Sherri Oken can update.

#### X. Right to Body Autonomy

##### A. Texas anti-abortion legislation.

1. A suggestion was made to draft a position statement.
2. There is a major march on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. What should we do?
3. Should we do something at Festival by the Lake?

##### B. Concerns

1. Those in the group reflected on how strong emotions are on this topic.
2. Not everyone on the Commission is present and may not share the same views.
3. Is this beyond our scope right now? We are a small group and cannot address everything.

##### C. Alternatives

1. Provide more general women's rights material, frame as reproductive justice rather than a women's rights issue, ACLU material
2. Have a speaker at one of our meetings talk about reproductive justice.

#### XI. WHRC Materials and Document Storage

##### A. Physical

1. Steve Maio says he can find space for us at Town Hall.
2. We must be sure to pick up needed material during regular Town Hall hours.

##### B. Electronic

**ACTION ITEM** Maria Muti and Daniela Nedbalek will provide a training at a future meeting.

#### XII. Items not anticipated

##### A. Wakefield Main Streets are trying to plan a Wakefield Street Fair inside the Americal

(similar to Wakefield 101) if enough groups express interest on October 24<sup>th</sup>, from 1 - 5. We agreed that we would like to participate.

##### B. Cultural Council Grants

1. We must apply soon for this fiscal year through June 2022.
2. The application can be a general statement of how the money will be used.
3. 2020 grant money was deferred. Do we still have access to that money?
4. Suggestion: Alistair Mook, family music performance for Pride Month.

**ACTION ITEM** Benny Wheat, with Maria Muti's assistance, will apply for a Cultural Council Grant to be applied to a Pride Month activity.

##### C. We need to form an MLK subcommittee

**ACTION ITEM** Benny Wheat will send an email asking for volunteers.

D. Positive Messaging

At our next meeting, we need to discuss whether our 2022 messaging campaign will be visual, language related or a combination.

A motion was made to adjourn at 9:40 p.m. All voted in favor