



Wakefield Human Rights Commission General Meeting

June 27th, 2023 by Zoom

Commissioners Present: Olivia Dannenberg, Jillian Dymment, Jeremy Little, Jessica Sutich, Sherri Oken CAE, Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez, Elizabeth Assenza

Commissioners Absent: Geeticka Upmanyu

Non-Voting Liaisons: Amy Rando

Other Public Present: Glavia Smith, Stephen Maio

7:05 pm Call to order

1. Brief Introductions: Went around and did quick introductions for new members.
 - a. Note: This will be Elizabeth Assenza's last meeting and she will be passing on the clergy rep role to Rabbi Greg Hersh and will share his contact info
 - b. Note: Stephen Maio, Town Administrator, was only able to attend for a few minutes but requested a meeting to be set up to meet the new chair.
2. Check-in activity (3-5 min) Skipped due to having already done the Brief Introductions
3. Public Participation: Glavia Smith will be the liaison for the Wakefield School System. She did a brief introduction and will be joining as many meetings as possible.
4. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. WHRC General Meeting (4.25.23): These minutes need to be located to be approved and submitted. Approval tabled until the next meeting.
 - b. WHRC General Meeting (5.16.23):
 - i. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the 5.16.23 general meeting, seconded and all voted in favor.
 - c. AAPI Planning Group Meeting: Notes were shared for HRC Records.
 - i. It was not an official commission event and does not need approval.
 - ii. Shared via email for visibility with the Commission and as an example of what we were able to accomplish.
5. New Chair position revisited:
 - a. Recap: Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez and Jeremy Little were both previously nominated to be chair. Both declined.
 - b. A discussion was held about the responsibility and time commitment of the position and which senior members might be able to manage it. Jeremy committed to share the weight of running events as Vice Chair.
 - i. Jessica Sutich - made a motion to nominate Sherri Oken as Chair. Jillian Dymment seconded the motion. Sherri Oken accepted the nomination.
 - ii. Motion was approved with one abstention
6. Recap and review of recent events:
 - a. APAH Cultural Celebration (5.27.23) Debrief: Sherri Oken reported.
 - i. Supported by dedicated community members who volunteered their time: all from the Asian American community. Geoff Sheau acted as sound technician and Winnie Carpenter, Shyan Ong, and Hyon Leon also were a huge help.
 - ii. Event funding was aided by a grant from the Mass Cultural Council.
 - iii. 150 attendees came to the event.
 - iv. Commission members are encouraged to attend one another's events as much as possible.
 - v. It was an overall success and hopefully the momentum will keep going.

- vi. Sherri has all of the phone numbers and contact info of the volunteers, performers and cultural contact people.
- vii. Additional assistance was provided by the Wakefield Youth Council. Vanessa Westlake (last name?) and Olivia were representatives as part of the youth council. Vanessa, who has been volunteering all year, is interested in being a student representative for the WHRC.
- b. Pride Flag Raising (6.1.23) Debrief: Teresa Aravena Gonzalez reported.
 - i. The event went well with a good turnout despite the weather.
 - ii. Senator Jason Lee and Town Council Chair Jonathan Chine spoke.
 - iii. Olivia Dannenberg asked whether the event was able to get into The Item. It was not due to some transition in positions. It was in the Patch, on community calendars and Sherri Oken submitted an article after to The Item.
 - iv. Elizabeth also reported that Reverend Brett gave a blessing. In the future ensure that we reach out to the Clergy representative so that we can have an interfaith blessing at events like this.
- c. Juneteenth Flag Raising (6.15.23) Debrief: Glavia Smith reported.
 - i. This was the 3rd year. The rain held off.
 - ii. The flag was raised by the Lynn ROTC colorguard and went up smoothly.
 - iii. Nicole Jacobs, NSJA Member, hosted
 - iv. State Rep. Kate Lipper-Garabeddian spoke.
 - v. The event did a good job with the background and history for the day.
 - vi. Black Student Union attended. Having a student rep was positive, and will bring more exposure to the events.
 - vii. Poet Laureate, Terry Carter, from Melrose delivered a very moving reading.
 - viii. Rabbi Greg also attended this event.
- 7. Finances review and Grant Status: The group had a discussion of our current budget, availability of grants, and what different events have spent thus far.
 - a. Jillian Dymment, who is new to the position, will be reaching out to Sherri Oken to get email information and information on funds.
 - b. Jill also participate in the discussion with Stephen Maio to learn more about what is possible for the role and WHRC.
 - c. There have been some hiccups for being reimbursed for the Women's Day Event (60 attendees) that will need to be ironed out.
 - d. To continue to get grants, we should keep track of how many people attend events. It will help us with applications.
 - e. Jillian asked whether we should submit for a currently held Mass Cultural Council grant again. Answer: It is possible to submit again but we can hold off until we know if we need it to supplement the budget. Each year we have run at a deficit thus far.
 - f. Sherri Oken will be reaching out to Stephen Maio regarding setting up a meeting with him about HRC financial procedures.
 - g. The next event to keep an eye on regarding Finances will be Hispanic Heritage Month.
- 8. On-boarding / orientation for new Commissioners: Sherri Oken and Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez will help with onboarding.
 - a. Sherri brought up the existence of a PowerPoint presentation that will help with onboarding. Sherri suggested Jeremy help with the onboarding but he will be on vacation. Teresa stepped in to do this onboarding.
 - b. Sherri Oken will send a doodle around to determine a date that will work best for this.
 - c. Sherri extended the onboarding to liaisons and people who want a refresher. The PowerPoint slides will be available on line for review after.
- 9. Hispanic Heritage Fall Event – Initial discussion: Planning will begin for this event.

- a. Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez signed up to be the lead and will begin to get community members to volunteer.
- ~~b.~~ Two community members indicated that they want to participate again: Ina Coveney and Saritin Rizutto
- c. Sherri encouraged commission members to reach out to Teresa and be involved.
- d. Sherri also flagged that the The Indigenous People event will also take place in the fall and the lead will be someone in the commission.

10. Matters not anticipated:

- a. Town day is October 7th. An email went out with a list of vendors but there wasn't yet more info. Jeremy Little mentioned that we should participate and it fills up and is first come first serve. Sherri Oken will reach out to let them know that we want to participate so that we have a table. Put it on the calendar so that we can take part in it.
- b. Sherri Oken will also look into a vendor for getting new lawn signs ("Hate has no home here"- \$5 a sign sold at events and via email). Last year's signs didn't hold up as well as expected. If we want something different let Sherri know because they have not been ordered yet.
- c. Jillian Dymont mentioned that the Peace Flag movement will send a bunch of flags for free. She will share information about what they look like and if we want to, she will reach out to get them.
- d. Farmer's Market: Jeremy Little will reach out via email to see if we can get a table there.

11. Review Action List:

- a. Jeremy Little will try to track down the April minutes
- b. Elizabeth Assenza will share Rabbi Greg Hersh's contact info.
- c. Jillian Dymont will contact Sherri Oken with any questions on her new Treasurer role.
- d. Sherri Oken will contact Stephen Maio, to set up an informational meeting and include Jillian Dymont
- e. Sherri Oken will send out a doodle with dates for an Onboarding session to be led by Sherri and Teresa
- f. Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez will begin to get volunteers for Hispanic Heritage Month
- g. Sherri Oken will share volunteer names with Teresa for HHM.
- h. Sherri Oken will reach out to the town to let them know we want to participate in Town Day (10-7-23).
- i. Sherri Oken will look into a new vendor for ordering lawn signs.
- j. Jillian Dymont will share info about look and size of Peace Flag movement flags with the group and order if approved.
- k. Jeremy Little will reach out via email to get a table at the Farmer's Market

12. Adjourn: A motion was made to adjourn at 8:00 p.m., seconded and all voted in favor.