



NEEDHAM HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

January 16, 2025

Needham Town Hall: Great Plain Room & via Zoom

Minutes

Attendance

Members Present

- Kerry Hurwitch
- Keith LaFace
- Marlene Schultz
- Cythina Ganung
- Bud Schram
- Tina Burgos
- Gemma Nauyokas
- Greg Dunn
- Jen Howard Schroeder
- Lt. Belinda Carroll (liaison - NPD)

Members Absent

- Lulu Wang

Staff Present

- Taylor Donaldson Jhurani, Assistant Director of Human Resources

Call to Order

Kerry Hurwitch opened the Human Rights Committee meeting at 7:33pm.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes for Approval

Marlene motions to approve the meeting minutes from December 2024. seconds the motion. Eight in favor of the motion. Zero opposed. Motion passes, December 2024 minutes approved.

MLK Jr. Day Program Update (Cynthia)

Event is Monday, 1/20/25, 10:00-11:30AM at Needham High School. Many students involved. Event publicized widely, including in Hometown Weekly. NHRC providing refreshments. Keith volunteered to serve as a back up in case someone could not come for an unforeseen reason. Please show up at 9:00AM to set up. Wear name tags. Welcome guests to the event.

Immigration event (Tina and Jen)

Event is Monday, 1/27/25 at 7:30PM at the Center at the Heights. Needham resident and immigration lawyer Heather Yountz of the Mass Law Reform Institute will be speaking. Fool Me Twice: The New Administration's Anti-Immigration Playbook. The forum will cover immigration policies of the new administration and how the community can provide support to those targeted. There will be a special presentation by Students Teaching Instruments to Create



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Community Harmony (STITCCH), a non-profit lead by NHS students to teach music to low income children at a homeless shelter.

What's "Normal" Anyway (Keith)

Keith reminded members of this program series created by Needham Community Education (NCE) and the Needham Education Foundation (NEF), and a dedicated group of Needham parents presents a four-part Disability Film & Panel Series at the Newman Elementary School auditorium. Dates January 8, February 11 (Autism), March 12 (Right to Read), and April 3 (The Disrupters).

Family Conversation Program (Keith)

Story-Starters program for families with kids ages 3-8. To teach families to have healthy conversations about race. There is a cost, but families can apply for scholarships. The program provides books and parent guides for discussions and will run January 26-March 23 at the First Parish.

Community Conversations on Race (Cynthia)

Town-led meetings, being organized by Katie King the Deputy Town Manager. This event will hopefully take place in the spring. NHRC could appoint a committee member to the planning group to take the place of former NHRC member Amelia Klein. Tina and Kerry will be at the next planning meeting January 30.

Police Update

No update. Lt. Carroll said she could follow up with the Chief about how Needham PD will be operating under the new Trump Administration Executive Orders about immigration.

School Update

No update.

Town Update

No update. Taylor has started to do updates to the NHRC webpage. There is currently one NHRC vacancy, possibly 2.

Other Business

Next meeting will be February 13 (moved up a week due to the February school vacation).

Members need to sign up to take minutes.

Future meetings:

March 20

April 17

May 15



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June 19

***Keith raised the question of moving the day of the week of monthly meetings. Not likely to happen this year, but possibly next.

NHRC on NRN (Marlene)

Meeting at the end of the month so NHRC members can participate in a focus group called by NRN to gather information about mental health. Marlene seeking members to participate, please do the meeting doodle.

Potential future program on housing discrimination and inclusion (Tina)

Tina would like the NHRC to sponsor an education event for the community to teach about the history of housing discrimination and connecting this to the current efforts in town to increase access to housing through the MBTA Act. Next month the Committee will brainstorm ideas.

Book discussion (Jen)

Months ago NHRC decided they would host a book discussion but a date was never selected. The Committee will take up this question next month as well.

Adjournment

After a motion and vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jen Howard Schroeder