

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Call To Order: 7:32

Attendance:

✓	Nicole Blankiet	✓	Robin Brown	✓	Richard Green III
✓	Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus	✓	Lorraine LeSter	✓	Asela Mourao
✓	Ozair Omarzai	✓	Edward Porowski		Max Rubin
✓	Sheri-Rose Rubin	✓	Michelle Tang	✓	Reena Wade
✓	Ed Zelle				

Present member(s) of the public:

Grace Schleck, Washington Place / Matthew Meoni, E Chestnut Ave / Elizabeth Feuer, Highland Ave / Charlotte Haq, Highland Ave / Bobbie Theivakumaran, E Chestnut Ave

Review & Approval of Minutes:

November Minutes - Approved by acclamation

New Business

Council Liaison Report:

Due to uptick in COVID-19 cases, the Borough has switched to virtual council meetings. All business within the Borough will also be conducted virtually. COVID-19 is the Borough's top focus with public health at the top of the list.

Commission members term expirations:

Asela Laguna Mourao 12/31/2020
Reena K. Wade 12/31/2020
Richard Green, III 12/31/2020

Public Comments:

Metuchen Youth 4 Equity and Racial Justice, a local community group represented by Grace Schleck, Matthew Meoni, Elizabeth Feuer, and Charlotte Haq, addressed HRC about their concern of how Chief Metuchen is represented in graphical depictions on Borough Seal, Police Badge, Police Cruisers, and Metuchen High School Seal. The group hopes to open a dialogue to find productive ways to honor The Lenape Nation and Chief Metuchen. Provided resources:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/199faE-T-j-wc40oytASIJznN836bCqtublsIOOh6mc0/edit>
<https://linktr.ee/MetuchenYERJ>
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-WsD51Ei18SK5y1nbBjSuD3FYIRvoH1R/view>
<https://www.facebook.com/metuchenyer>

Bobbie Theivakumaran spoke on behalf of SpeakUpNJ regarding Police Transparency Senate Bill 2656 that is currently being discussed amongst legislators. There will be a virtual event on December 6 about

Accountability and Transparency in Policing, community accountability, and what is happening on the state level for policing and racial justice. Event registration: <https://bit.ly/TakeActiononPolicing>

Board of Education Report:

Equity training has been going well for staff members during in-service days.

The school district has made COVID-19 a top priority and taking appropriate action to ensure health and safety amongst students and educators. The number of reported positive cases reflects that appropriate action has been taken.

Equity Commission Report:

Commission is reviewing data provided by Metuchen Police Department and hope to have a report to present to the public in early 2021.

Report from Father Zelle

The Metuchen Edison Area Interfaith Clergy Association (MEAICA) Group is increasing their efforts on educating the public about anti-racism. They are looking to host a guest speaker on anti-racism in late April 2021.

Public Meeting Accessibility

Councilwoman Rubin started a conversation about ongoing accessibility for borough meetings and encouraged commission members to reach out to those around them so feedback can be provided on improving accessibility. This will be an ongoing discussion the commission will have in 2021.

Old Business

Human Rights Day Discussion

Subcommittee: Reena (chair), Nicole, Michelle, Richard, Asela

December 9 @ 7 PM - Virtual Event

Co-sponsoring event with Metuchen Public Library. This is a family friendly event with the theme, "Recover Better: Stand Up For Human Rights." Presentation will last approximately 45-50 minutes providing a brief overview of the importance of human rights and how it relates to the pandemic.

Presentation format: Introduction / Story Time / Art Contest / Interactive Q&A / Actions for Human Rights Day / Candle Light Vigil

Windows of Understanding Project

Nicole is working with the Arts Council to determine details and direction the project will take. The overall format and discussion portion of the project may change to allow longer installations and combining intersectional themes. Expected launch date will be January 18, 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Upcoming Meeting/Important Dates

Human Rights Day - December 9 @ 7 PM on Zoom

2020 Metuchen HRC Meeting Schedule

January 5, 2021

Adjourned: 9:31 PM