

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, July 6, 2021 @ 7:30 pm

AGENDA & MINUTES

Welcome to any members of the public/public comment: Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus

- Called to order at 7:40 pm.
- We welcomed Jim Belikove to our meeting to discuss funding a Metuchen HRC Scholarship

Review & Approval of June minutes: Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus

- All members approved the June 2021 minutes

Report from the Council Liaison: Sheri-Rose Rubin

- Greenprint discussion from the Council meeting & cannabis regulation ordinance.
- Councilwoman Rubin shared updates from the most recent borough meeting including the Greenprint discussion and the cannibals regulation ordinance. She clarified Metuchen's choice on the cannabis bill given the amount of misinformation on social media this past week. She said that if we say yes now, we are buying into whatever the state decides in August and we are required to do it all. If we say no now, we can opt in at any time after they decide what they are going to do.

Comments sent from the public: Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus

- No comments from the public

Old Business:

- 2021 Event Planning
 - Indigenous Peoples Day,
 - Sheri-Rose will follow up with Mayor Busch to determine what form the 2021 Indigenous Peoples Day recognition will take in Metuchen.
 - Human Rights Day, etc.
 - Reena will spearhead the 2021 HRC Human Rights Day event, on Saturday, December 11.
 - Gender Identity & Expression event with the School District, would it be open to the community or just as a professional development for the District staff? Hazel-Anne will follow up with Ed Porowski to discuss this event with Sam King from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.
 - Black Women's Equal Pay Day on August 13 - educational social media posts.
 - Hispanic Heritage Month Event? 9/15-10/15. Need to discuss more.
 - Commission members were encouraged to propose additional HRC events between now and December.

New Business

- Metuchen Human Relations Commission Scholarship Discussion with James Belikove
 - Councilwoman Rubin introduced Mr. Belikove, a graduate of the MHS class of 1971. While he left for college then, some of his family members remained in town until the 1990s. While there was an initial idea of a Class of 1971 Scholarship in honor of their 50th anniversary of graduation, reading Priscilla Chenoweth's obituary in the NY Times inspired him to take a different approach. Ms. Chenoweth was a resident of Metuchen and was involved in CORE in the 1960s, along with Willie Williams who was in charge of the Middlesex County chapter of CORE. One of her children was in Jim's class at the Franklin Middle School.
 - Mr. Belikove will share the Metuchen Recorder articles that reference the Chenoweth & Williams family to the HRC to provide us with more information.
 - Mr. Belikove intends to endow an annual \$1,000 scholarship based on an essay that meets the parameters established by the Belikove family.
 - HRC intends to establish a standing committee to evaluate any scholarship applicants. Financial need and post secondary education plans are the two criteria for awarding the scholarship.
 - Mr. Belikove will send the Metuchen Recorder articles that reference the Chenoweth & Williams family to the HRC to provide us with more information.
 - The HRC needs to establish criteria for which HRC members can be on the scholarship sub-committee. Principal Porowski, the high school guidance department, and high school teachers can identify students who would be especially suited to apply for the scholarship award.
 - Mr. Belikove intends for this scholarship to be first awarded at graduation in the 2021-2022 school year.
 - Ozair suggests objective criteria to narrow the pool of applicants. Shannan suggested that there be clear parameters about serving on the subcommittee to avoid having commission members with eligible children on the subcommittee. Sheri-Rose emphasized that this scholarship is focused on students who embody inclusion and should also be needs-based.
- Liaison updates
 - Hazel-Anne reported that the BOE is working on a November 2022 referendum for updates to all of the Metuchen Schools to accommodate our growing population and ensure that our facilities are accessible and inclusive for all of our students.
 - Robin & Sheri-Rose reported that there will be an Accessibility Committee Community Conversation at 8:00 pm on July 28 via Zoom about Inclusive Recreation and ensuring that the Greenprint is accessible for all community members.
 - Ed Z. reported that MEAICA hopes to create more events like the Ibram X. Kendi event which was generally well-received by the community.
- Other New Business

Upcoming Meeting/Important Dates

- August 3: Metuchen HRC Meeting at 7:30 pm

2021 Commission Members & Liaisons

1. Robin Brown	2. Shannan Gonzalez	3. Richard Green, III
4. Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus	5. Lorraine Le Ster	6. Amanda Lin
7. Asela Mourao	8. Ozair Omarzai	9. Andrea Orlando
10. Edward Porowski	11. Max Rubin	12. Sheri-Rose Rubin
13. Michelle Tang	14. Nadia Tariq	15. Reena Wade
16. Ed Zelle		

Adjourned at 8:55 pm.