

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, September 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Metuchen Borough Hall

Start Time: 7:30

✓	1. Suneet Bhatt (Member)	✓	2. Joel Branch (Council Liaison)	✓	3. Joanne Cruz (Member)
✓	4. Khalila Cruz (Member)	✓	5. Laura Hermans (Secretary)	✓	6. Jacqueline Ho (Member)
	7. <i>Open HS Junior Liaison position</i>	✓	8. Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus (Chair & BOE Liaison)		9. Wayne Karalevich (MPD Liaison)
✓	10. Amanda Lin (Member)		11. Tara Matise (Member)		12. Andrea Orlando (Member)
	13. Edward Porowski (School District Liaison)		14. Cantor Emily Simkin (MEAICA Liaison)	✓	15. Emma Staal (HS Senior Liaison)
✓	16. Nadia Tariq (Vice Chair)		17. Bobbie Theivakumaran (MDA Liaison)	✓	18. Bhavi Vyas (Member)

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

Shailen Gandhi

Alex Reisig

Melinda DiBenedetto

Colleen Libertz

Jai Patel & Caroline Muglia

- Metuchen Pride Facebook Group
 - Founded in June, composed of parents/adults in kids' lives who are LGBTQ+ identified. Some Q+ kids, Q+ adults with kids, other Q+ adults.
 - About celebration and affirmation.
- "Family Pride Ball" Spring, 2024
 - Family oriented, inclusive ball. Inclusive of all including; Q+ youth, Q+ Parents, their family and allies.
 - Planning committee scheduled to meet next week.
 - Currently looking for a location and encouraging others to join.
 - Tentatively scheduled for March; 100 people expected.
 - The pride ball committee will fundraise, and find their own sponsors/endorsements from social media groups.
 - Joel suggested a potential partnership with the Metuchen Department of Recreation.
 - Joel will check the Borough calendar of events to ensure the date does not

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conflict with the Daddy/Daughter Dance or the Mother/Son bowling event.

Mo Gonzalez

- Metuchen Community Network/Common Agency - This organization sends email/texts each week, in order to connect community members with shared interests. They will have a table at the farmers market on September 16th. Currently looking for “community stewards” to develop questions to ask the community and spur conversation.
 - First In-Person gathering will be on Saturday, September 23, 7pm-9pm at Beans & Bread Metuchen.

Review & Approval of June & July 2023 minutes: Laura Hermans

- June 2023 Meeting Attendance:
 - Suneeet, Joanne, Khalila, Wayne, Laura, Dylan, Hazel-Anne, Amanda, Tara, Andrea, Ed, Emma, Nadia
 - Approved
- July 2023 Meeting Attendance:
 - Joanne, Laura, Jackie, Hazel-Anne, Wayne, Andrea, Cantor Simkin, Bhavi
 - Approved

Old Business:

- Wellness MLK Park on Saturday, September 9, 3-5:30 pm
 - Melinda-Confirming Zumba instructor time.
 - Remind attendees to bring yoga mats on socials
 - Library table with resources
 - Send reminders to those volunteers who are speaking
- Land Acknowledgement Statement
 - Subcommittee will meet soon
- Rainbow Crosswalk
 - The Borough may have safety concerns, and it can't be on a county road
 - Joel to look into what (if any) research can be done and will follow up with Melissa Pearlstein. Commission members should send examples and research to Joel.
 - Asbury, Westfield and Maplewood are examples of NJ towns with rainbow crosswalks.

New Business:

- YMCA Welcoming week (September 8 - September 17th)
 - Metuchen 11-15th
 - Will include: Health fairs, group exercise sampler, government services, no joiners fee and on the spot financial aid decisions. Posts will be on the YMCA page, and Alex will DM it to Metuchen HRC.
- Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15)
 - Joanne is working with other business owners to coordinate individual

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- business specials/events.
- Profiles of business owners of hispanic heritage
 - Amanda may have the original posts from previous years
- Thomas Mundy Peterson (October 6)
 - Farmers market table on October 6th to encourage voter registration
 - NJ recognizes this on March 31 (the day he casted the vote)
 - Social post on this day
- Indigenous Peoples Day (October 9)
 - Social media posts
 - Zoom meeting for Land Acknowledgement announcement
- Human Rights Day Art Contest (December 10)
 - Possible story time at the library
 - In previous years, participants marched from the library to Cai's Cafe with candles after story time.
 - Art contest for students
 - Share a reading that expresses your feelings about human rights
- Winter Festival Parade (November 26)
 - Volunteers are needed
- Next Month's Agenda & Other New Business

Liaison Reports:

Emma (High School Senior Liaison)

- Today was the first day of school. Half days for the whole week due to heat.

Metuchen Downtown Alliance

- September 9th: Sidewalk Sale
- September 23rd: Townwide Tea Party
- Sept 21st: Why Representation Matters at Suite Metuchen with special guest, American Girl Author, Varsha Bajaj

Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus (Board of Education Liaison)

- Referendum construction is beginning within the next few months. The timeline is posted on the Metuchen School District website.

2023 Meeting Dates:

October 3 | November 7 | December 5

Adjourned: 8:49pm