

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

Minutes

Call Meeting to order at 7:30 PM sharp: Hazel-Anne Johnson & Nicole Blankiet

Attendees: all Sophie Falkenstein, Jordan Valliquette, Ben Small, Kevin McPeek, Leah Jiorle, Father Ed Zelle, Sheri-Rose Rubin, Richard Green, III, Reena Wade, Ozair Omarzai, Hazel-Anne Johnson, Nicole Blankiet, Asela Mourao and Rob Facchini.

Welcome to any members of the public/public comment: Hazel-Anne Johnson & Nicole Blankiet

Review & Approval of January minutes: Reena Wade- Yes

Report from the Council Liaison: Sheri-Rose Rubin - see below under New Business

Comments sent from the public: Hazel-Anne Johnson- None

Old Business

- Hazel-Anne: 2019 Diversity & Inclusion Training Workshop update. Award/Window sticker for completion. - Sheri-Rose & Hazel-Anne attended an MDA meeting and gave a Needs Assessment Survey but to a limited audience; Nicole suggested giving survey to BBBs (Brainy Borough Babes) FB group and it was agreed that it was a good idea. Sheri-Rose said that BBBs might be more receptive to participating in filling out the survey. Discussion of offering workshop participants a "sticker", Richard said he'd help with designing it.

Leah mentioned that there was an organization that is interested in setting up in Metuchen a chapter of a Professional Small Business Org that is also getting together and might be a broader group (LeTIP).

- Website update: Google form, photos, resources - International Women's Day post on FB, but not connected to Instagram; official MHRC email still needs to be verified in order for it to link up; borough website hasn't been updated; no forms have been sent/ received.
- Leah: Book Club/Speaker Series update - Leah reached out to Bill Schlavis, teacher at MHS, met and discussed the format and will be touching base later this month; Library has 4 or 5 copies; confirmed for Wed April 10 7:30-9 and could donate some refreshments and snacks; discussed an Event page to get an idea of interest; Richard suggested a FB ad/ boost to promote the event to a wider audience or a target audience.
- February Black History Month Event cancellation- The Subcommittee met in the winter. Hazel-Anne suggested making partnerships with orgs that already have events, connections and promote/ support their events, not duplicating efforts/ fighting for same speakers, etc, for very popular events.

New Business

- 2019 Event Planning, subcommittee assignments and schedule.
 - Metuchen World Day - May 19th TBD (Day of Spring Fair) - Reena volunteered to Chair the event, has already been contacted by interested performers; Nicole reached out to book the Old Franklin Schoolhouse, but need to confirm the hours. The Metuchen Library could be the backup. The subcommittee includes Reena, Nicole, Asela, Richard, and Ozair. Aside from performers, it was suggested to have a panel on culture or diversity; possible focus on languages, reach out to Neve Shalom and others.

- Diversity Training Schedule - TBD
 - Book Club Speaker Series Schedule - April 10, Aug 7, Nov 13 confirmed with the library
 - Country Fair - have a booth again?
 - Human Rights Day
 - Other events or partnerships- Winter Parade?
 - Father Zellely suggested we partner, promote with the New Hope Baptist MLK event in Metuchen
- Motion to not meet in August was carried.
 - Ben Smalls might have some conflicts with BOE meetings and HRC meetings and make appropriate adjustments.
 - Book Club/Speaker Series and Committee - Leah asks for any ideas or contacts for local and free speakers for the next books.
 - Ordinance to add additional Commission members - Sheri-Rose stated that an ordinance revision would have to happen to get new members, but is looking to see if there is an easier way to get your more, maybe as alternates or non-voting. We currently have 13 active members. Father Zellely and Sheri-Rose said they have been approached by members of the public who are interested in participating.
 - New Secretary for HRC- Asela Mourao
 - Grant funding possibilities – Sheri-Rose stated that the Borough has a grant writer that she met with and suggested the MHRC apply for The Public Scholars Project, which is guaranteed, and would provide us with a catalog of experts and speakers on a variety of topics. She suggested Immigrant Experiences and Identity and Differences as topic for a speaker; we can select the speaker once we get approved; Ben suggested having this speaker for our Human Rights Day celebration.
 - Revisit invitation of MPD officer to commission - Sheri-Rose contacted Chief Irizarry, they are short-staffed for a liaison but is receptive to addressing any concerns the HRC has via Sheri-Rose.

Upcoming Meeting/Important Dates

- Next meeting – Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Current Commission Members

1. Nicole Blankiet
2. Sophie Falkenstein
3. Richard Green, III
4. Leah Jiorle
5. Hazel-Anne Johnson
6. Sheri-Rose Rubin
7. Kevin McPeek
8. Asela Mourao
9. Jordan Valiquette
10. Ozair Omarzai
11. Ben Small
12. Reena Wade
13. Ed Zellely
14. *Intern: Rob Facchini

Meeting Adjourned at 8:40 pm.