

Human Rights Commission of Newburyport (formerly the Commission for Diversity and Tolerance)
Meeting Notes
December 1, 2016
Senior Center
Meeting 7:00 P.M.

Attendance: Tom Getz, Sheila Trieff, Beth Horne, Kat Preftes, Margaret McQuillan, Shawn Flaherty, Tommy Furlong, Hannah Wilson, Judy Lacroix, Ben Resnick, Sheila Trieff

Guests: Steph Pellegrini, Nancy Kreusser, Hazem Mahmoud, John Giordano

Call To Meeting 7:00P.M.

K. Preftes read the mission statement and elaborated that the HRC responds to incidents and provides advocacy.

Public Comment: The public was invited to speak but had no comments

Check-in with Commissioners:

Tom Getz: Michael Eatman has already created a way to involve parents with the schools. He will be meeting with the Superintendent next week.

Judy Lacroix volunteered to be the person who checks whether the grants are carried out.

Shawn Flaherty informed about the meeting of the Human Rights Advocates: 7-9 P.M. Central Church. This group spun off of Newburyport commons.

Margaret McQuillan wondered how to create a central wheel which connects all this work.

Kat Preftes briefed on the meeting Beth Horne, Peter Blaiwas and she had with Mayor. The Day of Service letter was approved. We will move forward with the High School venue. The mayor made some revisions to the communications plan and asked for a new Executive Summary. Once we have a final version we will meet with police, send to the school committee for review and city council. The mayor is supportive of a community read such as *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving. She also supports the interfaith groups educational event on the faiths of Newburyport, a future event on Islam, and our participation in other HRC groups. We learned we can work in other communities for the Day of Service if they serve Newburyport.

Kat Preftes also describe a friend who has an 8th grader. Who has Asian friends and is experiencing some hateful talk.

Minutes:

Minutes of November 3rd approved

Minutes of November 22nd approved as amended.

Nancy Kruesser is an ELL teacher for Grades 4-8. She has lived in NBPT for 20 years and has two children. She subbed in schools for several years until she found her niche with ELL. This is her first full time year. Angela Bick is the dept head. Newburyport is a low incidence district with 20 students K-12. They are mostly Brazilian Portugese. Italian, Napal, China, Spanish, The number of students is fluid and it seems to be growing. Karina Mascia the Assistant Principal at the Bresnahan is the Family and Community Coordinator. She works to help make connections.

We discussed whether classes would be needed for the parents of the students. It was suggested that we explore with Karina Mascia or Angela Bick.

Nancy has only witnessed positive interactions among peers but has heard of a negative incident. Generally the youth are open. The youth celebrate their home country in Nepal, Sardinia. Each student will highlight their home country through music and food. How often she sees them is dependent upon their proficiency.

The best way to support them would be to provide transportation after school Kat Preftes will explore with Youth Services. Margaret McQuillan will reach out to Angela Bick to see if there is a way to offer something at the school.

We suggested an annual update on how it is going.

CDT to HRC

There is a need for a press release, article for paper. New logos....website, new email address.....

There was consensus to move forward with the logo which had the name fully spelled out.

Shawn Flaherty is to draft a press release which would include a statement from the mayor. It will be reviewed before the next meeting for approval at the meeting.

Kat Preftes will update the email and Peter Blaiwas will update the website. Hannah/Beth will handle facebook.

It was decided to include the needs assessment with the launch of the name change.

Forum: Community outreach/community forum.

It was decided to hold a planning meeting on January 5-7:30-9 P.M. after our regular meeting to open up to stakeholders. Beth Horne to invite the stakeholders. Our regular meeting will begin at 6 P.M.

School response-

Andi Egmont –There is a new youth leadership program which we will explore in January. Kat Preftes looked into ideas for a speaker but it was challenging to know what to choose. She will ask the superintendent the best way to proceed.

It is quite likely that Michael Eatman will have ideas on a response or speaker.

Day of Service

Kat Preftes will email to the HRC the revised Day of Service letter. Peter Blaiswas will email it out. NHS gym will be the kick off venue.

Interfaith

Ben Resnick let us know that the faith dialogue is still in the works. Next week Sheila Trieff is meeting with the clergy group to do some planning.

Public Comment

Meeting reopened to the guests 8:50 P.M.

Sandra Thatcher spoke about a grant she is working on to get kids connected to the other parts in the world. She is looking for assistance in finalizing a grant.

John Giordano –He is a former college professor and community educator with a PhD in social justice programs. Interested in thinking about ways background could be of help to the HRC.

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:00 P.M.