

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Call To Order: 7:40

Attendance of Commission Members & Liasons

✓	1. Joel Branch (Council Liaison)	✓	2. Khalila Cruz (Member)	✓	3. Shannan Foat-Gelber (Member)
✓	4. Rebecca Greenbaum (Member)	✓	5. Laura Hermans (Secretary)		6. Jacqueline Ho (Member)
✓	7. Dylan Jaques (HS Junior Liaison)	✓	8. Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus (Chair & BOE Liaison)	✓	9. Abdullah Khan (Member)
	10. Amanda Lin (Member)		11. Joanne Cruz (Member)		12. Andrea Orlando (Member)
✓	13. Edward Porowski (School District Liaison)		14. Michelle Tang (HS Senior Liaison)	✓	15. Nadia Tariq (Co-Chair)
	16. Bobbie Theivakumaran (MDA Liaison)	✓	17. Edmund Zelle (MEAICA Liaison)		18. Audra Sbarra (Accessibility Committee Liaison)

Welcome to any members of the public/public comment: Hazel-Anne M.

Johnson-Marcus Review & Approval of March & April minutes: Laura Hermans

- Minutes approval postponed, not enough Members were present to approve.

Old Business:

- [Williams Scholarship](#)
 - Subcommittee meeting to discuss the scholarship applications submitted on 4/29.
 - 4 applications received. Ed Zelle is joining the sub committee.
- May (AAPI Heritage & Jewish-American Month)
 - Amanda will work on some posts for AAPI Heritage month, and Rebecca will work on some posts for Jewish-American Heritage Month.
 - Members are encouraged to share posts on social media.
- June - Events co-sponsored with the Metuchen Downtown Alliance & the Metuchen-Edison NAACP
 - *Juneteenth*: Afro-futurism art in storefront windows. Black Is King will be shown at the end of the night. Considering a social media post defining the theme.
 - *Pride Month*: Laura, Shannon, Dylan, Joanne and Andrea to schedule a planning subcommittee meeting.
- Follow up from Community Conversation Across the Spectrum
 - Event was very informative and fostered an environment where community connections were made. Laura will connect Principal Porowski with local Autism Support Organizations, [North Star](#) and the [Center for Autism Research](#) for potential

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partnerships in furthering professional development within the Metuchen School District.

New Business

- Liaison Reports
 - *Hazel-Anne Marcus Johnson (Board of Education Liaison)*
 - Final budget was presented at the last Board of Education Meeting. A website about the [Referendum](#) is live and thoroughly outlines the plan and budget information. Voters will see 3 referendum questions on the ballot, 2 of which are dependent on each other: 1) physical infrastructure & 2) funding for operating within that infrastructure. The 3rd question refers to an upgrade to the Metuchen High School gymnasium and is characterized as a “nice-to-have”.
 - The current courtesy bus company did not renew its contract with the district. The District is actively searching for a replacement company to offer courtesy bussing in our district.
 - *Joel Branch (Council Liaison)*
 - Working on improving and streamlining the township website.
 - Joel will reach out to the police department for an officer to attend MHRC meetings.
 - *Audra Sbarra (Accessibility Committee Liaison)*
 - The Conversation Across the Spectrum event resulted in a great community discussion.
 - Currently working on the development of sensory resources within the borough. Brainstorming ideas on how to make community events more accessible and developing an inclusive yoga class.
 - AARP community conversation was canceled due to lack of public interest.
 - *Ed Zelley (MEA/ICA Liaison):*
 - Yom HaShoah service was a success. St. Luke’s has a large indoor space available to any community groups needing a facility to meet in.
 - *Ed Porowski (School District Liaison)*
 - High School Graduation is scheduled for June 24, 2022 at 5 pm.
 - No School on June 17 for Juneteenth Observance.
 - Equity in the School District: The Student Equity Committee held a summit with the GSA and Empowerment Club. The focus was to bridge the gap between teachers and students. Discussions resulted in the development of a suggestion box for the gender inclusive bathroom at MHS. Suggestions placed in this box go directly to Mr. Porowski and the GSA faculty advisor.
- **Other New Business**
 - Partnership with the Metuchen YMCA

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Melinda DiBenedetto - Metuchen YMCA Board Manager

Seema Pande - YMCA Board of Director and Chair DEI committee

- YMCA and MHRC to identify commonalities and offer mutual support to events and initiatives.
- The MHRC leadership were invited to attend a YMCA DEI committee meeting in near future.

- Dylan will assist MHRC with implementing dual posts on multiple instagram accounts at one time.
- Partnership with the JCC & the Jewish Federation. Engaged in promotion of the Yom HaShoah event shared by our MEAICA Liaison, Father Zelley.

- Dylan to begin search for new High School Senior Liaison for next year

2022 Meeting Dates:

June 7 | July 5 | Aug. 2 | Sept. 6 | Oct. 4 | Nov. 1 | Dec. 6

Adjourned: 8:52