

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, October 4, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Start Time: 7:36pm

	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 Senior 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. Emma Staal (HS Junior Liaison)		15. Nadia Tariq (Co-Chair)
	16. Bobbie Theivakumaran (MDA Liaison)	✓	17. Edmund Zelley (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 September minutes: Laura Hermans

September Attendance: Joel, Rebecca, Bobbie, Khalila, Shannan, Laura, Hazel-Anne, Joanne, Andrea, Nadia, Audra

- No Quorum, September minutes approval postponed until November meeting.

Old Business:

- Thomas Mundy Peterson Day of Democracy: Saturday, October 8, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
 - In association with League of women voters
- Hispanic Latinx Heritage Month Celebration: Saturday, October 15, 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm
 - YMCA Zumba Class on the plaza during the Farmers Market @ 11:00 am, set up at 10:45 am. Shannan will be present for the class and host an HRC table.
 - 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm MDA event on the plaza: Public speakers, live band, salsa, merengue, Spanish rock and professional dancers. The food vendors present will include; Mariachi, Angie's and Hatch 44.

New Business

- Indigenous People's Day: Monday, October 10th
 - Social Media Posts
- National Caregiver Month: November
- Human Rights Day: Saturday, December 10
 - Potential activities include: Art and essay contest with the theme of "What does Human Rights mean to you?"
- Welcome to our New High School Junior Liaison - Emma Staal
- Community Conversations:
 - Breaking the *Boys will be Boys* mindset
 - This community conversation will be considered for the 2023 event schedule.

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- Respect of Asian Names
 - This community conversation will be considered for the 2023 event schedule.
- Elena Kakwani, Metuchen community member, spoke about a new community networking website starting up in Metuchen. *Common Agency*, is an organization striving to build networks of community members with common interests, outside of social media. Connections are made via weekly questions sent to the community via email and text. These weekly questions are developed from community submissions. Based on individual answers, the organization connects like minded individuals and encourages in person meet ups. Common Agency strives to amplify diverse voices, connect pockets of the community that are segregated and facilitate meetups for community projects.
- Next Month's Agenda
 - HRC Members are encouraged to brainstorm topics for discussion in the next meeting.

Liaison Reports

- *Hazel-Anne Marcus Johnson (Board of Education Liaison)*
 - Metuchen BOE Equity Committee discussed hiring challenges in teaching, including how to expand the talent pool. The Committee discussed tapping into diverse talent networks such as the Black and Hispanic Latino Male Teachers Network in addition to CJ Pride. Welcoming and positive language in job ads should be utilized. The Committee discussed District assessment of training practices for HR staff reviewing applications. Discussed the possibility of inviting minority owned businesses to contract for the referendum, if it passes. [Metuchen BOE Referendum](#)
- *Audra Sbarra (Accessibility Committee Liaison)*
 - Partnering with MDA to co-host the Haunted Downtown event. The Accessibility Committee will sponsor a "Pod" tent which will be a safe and secure place to offer soothing options for those with sensory concerns or challenges. Everyone will be welcome, with and without special needs.
 - Partnered with the Traffic and Transportation Committee to inform Borough residents of a sidewalk closure on New Street.
 - Committee will be hosting a community presentation at the Senior Center on October 25 @ 12:00 pm. The focus will be on recent Medicare changes resulting from the national Inflation Reduction Act.
 - Committee is currently undergoing restructuring to better meet community needs.
- *Ed Zelle (MEA/ICA Liaison):*
 - Currently developing a statement in response to the bulldozer incident which took place in Edison during Indian Independence Day.
 - Hunger walk Sunday, November 6 @ 2:00 pm. Funds will be raised for Metuchen Food Bank, charities for hunger and emergency funds for people in need. The walk begins at Centenary United Methodist Church and ends at Roosevelt Park.
 - MLK celebration at New Hope Baptist Church: Monday, January 16 @ 3:00 pm
- *Ed Porowski (School District Liaison)*

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- Metuchen High School encourages inclusivity with “people first language”, reflecting district goals of equity and inclusivity. The district is focused on listening to a variety of perspectives and hearing all voices regarding this topic.

2022 Meeting Dates:

November 1; December 6

Subcommittees for Upcoming Events:

- Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month
 - Joanne, Andrea, Khalila, Bobbie, Amanda & Melinda (YMCA)
- Thomas Mundy Peterson Day of Democracy
 - Joel, Shannan, Andrea, Bobbie, Khalila
- Human Rights Day
 - Nadia, Rebecca & Laura, Amanda

Adjourned: 9:20