

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, March 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Metuchen Borough Hall

Start Time: 7:31pm

	1. Suneet Bhatt (Member)	✓	2. Joel Branch (Council Liaison)	✓	3. Joanne Cruz (Member)
✓	4. Khalila Cruz (Member)		5. Arthur Flaherty (MPD Liaison)	✓	6. Laura Hermans (Secretary)
✓	7. Jacqueline Ho (Member)	✓	8. Dylan Jaques (HS Senior Liaison)	✓	9. Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus (Chair & BOE Liaison)
✓	10. Amanda Lin (Member)		11. Tara Matisse (Member)		12. Andrea Orlando (Member)
✓	13. Edward Porowski (School District Liaison)		14. Emma Staal (HS Junior Liaison)		15. Nadia Tariq (Vice Chair)
	16. Bobbie Theivakumaran (MDA Liaison)		17. Bhavi Vyas (Member)		18. Edmund Zelle (MEAIKA Liaison)

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

- Michael Geschlecht
- Melinda DiBenedetto
- Colleen Libertz
- Lt. Karalevich
- Shailen Gandhi

Review & Approval of January 2023 minutes: Laura Hermans

- January 2023 Meeting Attendance: Suneet, Joel, Joanne, Khalila, Artie, Laura, Dylan, Hazel-Anne, Amanda, Tara, Andrea, Ed P., Emma, Nadia, Bhavi
 - Approved
- February 2023 Meeting Attendance: Suneet, Joel, Khalila, Laura, Jackie, Nadia, Bhavi
 - Approved

Old Business:

- Contact information & 2023 Subcommittee Sign ups
- Black History Month: Thank you to all who participated in the Montford Point Marines event!
- Women's History Month
- Windows of Understanding 2023
 - Thursday, March 9 at 7:30 pm: Subcommittee Meeting
 - Saturday, March 11th 1pm-3pm: Opening at Berkshire Hathaway
 - Thursday, March 23 at 7:30 pm: Community Conversation at the

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New Business:

- Williams Scholarship Committee formation
 - Recipient represents DEI understanding and acceptance at Metuchen High School and in the community.
 - Contact Mrs. Hambridge regarding adding an addendum onto the description; inquiring about specific financial aid. The Campbell school scholarship application may be used as a guideline/reference for the financial need question.
- Land Acknowledgement: As the Borough website is updated, the topic of land acknowledgement in Metuchen has been discussed. Dylan may have contact information for Lenape representatives.
- Mindfulness on the Plaza: Publicly accessible event to promote mental health. September 12th is Mindfulness day. Some ideas for this event include; yoga, CBT guest speaker and guided meditation. Tentative for Saturday, September 9th.
- Brainstorming ways to make books that promote gender and cultural diversity more accessible to youth:
 - People could donate money through a website to be used by school and public libraries.
 - Create an Amazon wish list which community members can use to purchase and donate books to schools and libraries.
 - Meet with Edgar principal to discuss options.
 - Laura and Khalila will discuss with Dr. Costanza at the next Campbell School community advisory committee meeting.
- Can we partner with community organizations who organize community events to make them more accessible and welcoming to all genders and family types?
 - Discuss with Recreation Department
- Autism Acceptance Month: Social Media Posts - Potentially partner with SEPAC
- AAPI “How to be a good neighbor” series
 - Words matter- Rebecca Greenbaum previously expressed interest in helping. Possible partnership with Temple Emanu-El.

Liaison Reports:

- *Joel Branch (Council Liaison):*
 - The Request for Proposals for improvements to the Borough website will go out in April/May. All committees/councils will get a web space.
 - The recent budget presentation highlighted funds available to offer video conferencing.
 - The Borough of Metuchen is a finalist for the Great American Main Street Award! On March 18th @ 10:00am- 12:00pm there will be a video shoot on Main Street, by the train bridge. This video of the community celebrating will be shared publicly if Metuchen wins this award. Everyone Welcome.

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- *Ed Porowski (School District Liaison):*
 - Budget presentations are currently underway. The district is consistently meeting with Architects regarding referendum plans.

- *Hazel-Anne Johnson-Marcus (BOE Liaison):*
 - Equity is a priority in the process of building new additions to our district.
 - The Dapper bus contract was renewed and members of the student advisory board presented to the BOE. Additional student advisory board members will be present at future BOE meetings through June.
 - Negotiations with the teacher's union for their new contract are currently underway.
 - The school district will continue to offer parent workshops including one on Math resources, with a previous Introduction to SOGIE presentation.

Upcoming Activities:

- Women's History Month (March)
- Neurodiversity Celebration Week (March 13-19)
- Autism Acceptance Month (April)
- AAPI and Jewish American Heritage Month (May)
- UN World Day (May 21)

2023 Meeting Dates:

May 2 | June 6 | July 11 | September 5 | October 3 | November 7 | December 5

Adjourned: 8:51pm