

Metuchen Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order: Ms. Jiorle called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

Attendees: Aiden Nelson, Sophie Falkenstein, Nicole Blankiet, Leah Jiorle, Hazel-Anne Johnson, Linda Koskoski, Richard Green, III., Ozair Omarzai and Reena Wade.

Welcome to any members of the public/public comment: There were no comments from the public.

Review & Approval of March minutes: March minutes were not approved due to a lack of voting quorum based on current meeting attendees that were at the March meeting. Mr. Omarzai, Ms. Falkenstein and Ms. Nelson could not vote on approval of minutes. Upon review of March minutes, feedback was provided to address spelling in last names of Ms. Blankiet and Ms. Mourao.

Report from the Council Liaison: No report from Councilperson Koskoski.

Old Business

By-Laws The By-laws were approved by second and final vote.

Social media update The MetuchenHRC@gmail.com was created as a stand-alone account in order to create a MetuchenHRC Instagram account. The email from the Borough will forward to the MetuchenHRC@gmail.com. In regards to the Metuchen Human Relations Commission microsite, Ms. Jiorle will send the administrator the HRC contact information for the Facebook, Instagram and email accounts as well as the minutes and the agendas. In regards to the Facebook and Instagram postings, we will take time each meeting to discuss content. Ms. Wade to provide list of meeting dates.

UN World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development In honor of the UN World Day, Metuchen will hold a Metuchen World Day, Celebrating Our Cultural Diversity event at the Old Franklin Schoolhouse from 12pm-3pm on May 20, 2018. The sub-committee provided an update on plans and there was discussion of reaching out to the Media to help advertise the event.

Metuchen High School Updates

April 20th Walkout: On the 19th anniversary of the Columbine High School shooting, there will be a scheduled walk-out after school and seventeen minutes of silence at 10:00 a.m. It is anticipated that approximately 200 kids will participate.

Health Class Curriculum: The Metuchen High School Empowerment Club is requesting consent be added to curriculum as survey conducted at school resulted in feedback that the topic was not covered. Other topics related to the health curriculum that are being discussed by the Club include mental health, sexual assault and LGBT rights.

New Business

Discussion - Metuchen Police Department (MPD) policy regarding immigration and Immigrations & Custom Enforcement (ICE); Chief David Irizarry attended the Metuchen HRC meeting and shared the police department's stance on immigration status. They are bound by Directive 23 from the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office which directs them not to ask victims or potential victims their immigration status. Exceptions may occur if on direction from the Prosecutor's Office, if there is a driving under the influence charge. Other ways the question may arise is during discovery in the pre-trial phase.

If someone is arrested for a driving under the influence violation or other indictable offense (not a Disorderly Persons offense, Petty Disorderly Persons offense or a local ordinance violation), the Metuchen Police Department is required to ask the immigration status. Further, if the person discloses they are illegally in the U.S., the MPD is required to immediately notify ICE of that information and the reason for the arrest. If the MPD is advised, there may be an ICE detainer request they need to honor based on the status. The MPD will only detain the individual for 24 hours.

Chief Irizarry also shared that if ICE asks for the MPD for assistance, they respond. They do so for ethical reasons as well as the requirement under NJ state law, Title 48. The MPD does not investigate for ICE. If ICE is planning an arrest in Metuchen, they will call after the fact and advise of the arrest. The MPD then documents that another jurisdiction was in their town.

Miscellaneous Information Provided by Chief Irizarry: The MPD participates in diversity training through the mandatory annual NJ learn program which includes a video and assessment. In addition, Chief Irizarry sends MPD officers for training at the CLEAR Institute. Lastly, Chief Irizarry advised that implicit bias training has begun at the state level. Ms. Johnson had requested follow-up on the roll-out of the implicit bias training to occur at a later HRC meeting.

Upcoming Meeting/Important Dates

- Next meeting – May 1, 2018

Current Commission Members

1. Nicole Blankiet
2. Sophie Falkenstein
3. Richard Green, III
4. Leah Jiorle
5. Hazel-Anne Johnson
6. Linda Koskoski
7. Kevin McPeek
8. Asela Mourao
9. Aiden Nelson
10. Ozair Omarzai
11. Ben Small
12. Reena Wade
13. Ed Zelle