

Jun 01 2021 2:34 pm

Public Meeting

Human Rights Commission

Meeting Minutes

Fitchburg, Ma 01420

Date: April 13, 2021

Time: 5:30pm

Location: via Zoom

In attendance were:

Commissioners: Senovia Bolivar, Barbara Nealon, Hafsa Asfa, Martiza Knight, Cheryl Maguy-Stewart, Mariah Pidgen, David Roth, and Maryam Ashraf

Presenters]: Superintendent of Fitchburg Public Schools Robert Jokela and Administrative Staff: Eva Kelly, Cari Fabale, Roann Demanche, Jon Thompson, Adam Renda,; Dr.Dannette Day of behalf of the Abolitionist Park

Others in attendance: Susan Bucholz, Susan Navarre, Alicia, ALFA Instructor Two, Paula and Paul Luria SURJ, Evie & Garry Gleckel

AGENDA

- Meeting was called to order at 5:30pm
- Welcoming and Introductions
- Review of previous meeting minutes March, 2021-meeting minutes accepted as written
- Public Comment Period-*Opportunity for the public to speak during a Commission Meeting*

Chairperson or designee will ask if anyone in the audience wishes to speak on any matter appearing on the agenda. If you wish to address the commission, raise your hand, when recognized, you must stand state your name and address and the reason for your speaking -none

New Business

Presentations:

- Superintendent of Schools Robert Jokela-Teacher Recruiting Plan Update-refer to presentation provided by both Superintendent Jokela and Adam Renda
Question and answer period followed with recommendations to reach out to local minority lead organizations for marketing positions as well as providing feedback to candidates who apply as to the status of their application.
Action: Informational Ms Nealon noted since the Superintendents appointment, he has been transparent with his findings beginning with his initial assessment shortly after taking the position on the area for improvement with recruitment and retainment of minorities. She also recommended reaching out directly to diverse groups directly in our region for recruitment.
- Dr.Dannette V.Day—An overview of the Abolitionist Park-refer to website for more details-which was shared at the meeting. The park is located at 42-50 Day Street; Opening of the Park potentially” Juneteenth” June 19th.
Question & Answer period followed.
Action: Informational

Old Business-

- Residents individual advocacy work continues to be provided.
Dr.Knight continues to work with Resident who felt he was unlawfully terminated from his employer-has secured an attorney to work with MCAD.
Ms Ford-Rhodes is currently working with 3 residents 1. Family run business and Landlord issues; 2. Family with Behavioral Health support/resources; 3. Person referred to Fitchburg Police Department specific for filing complaint against Our Father’s House.
Ms Nealon noted Our Father’s House investigation per Chief Martineau remains ongoing and it will not be discussed further until an outcome has been determined.
Ms Bolivia reported assisting various community members navigating through various needs and offering Interpreter Services-Spanish.
- Education Racial Justice Group/SURJ subgroup reports:

Mr. Roth-no report Ms Afsa & Dr.Knight working with group specific to school recruitment process reflecting the communities in which they serve specific to minorities.

- Other items, topics, programs for discussion for future meetings

April is Diversity Month-Multicultural Festival-Commissioner Knight reported on the 4/10/21 event went well and videos have been placed on our Facebook Page. Commissioner Maguy-Stewart recommended either translation services or Interpreter services for the English only speakers moving forward.

April's Stand Against Racism Event-April 30, 2021. Three Pyramids and North Central Mass Minority Coalition Is coordinating efforts at this time.

Peace Pole Project –focusing on Children/Youth –Action: Commissioner Maguy-Stewart to coordinate efforts once pandemic has ended. Chairperson Nealon will follow up with Monty Tech for Peace Poles to be made for the children/youth for the program to paint, color etc.

- Adjournment 6:45pm

Meeting Minutes submitted by,

Maryam Ashraf and Barbara Nealon.