

Dedham Human Rights Commission

Meeting Minutes: August 18, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

In attendance: Joe Borsellino, Michael Buckley, Diane Barry Preston, Jim Kaufman, Philjay Solar, Chris Kelly, Diane Loud (via phone).

Public Comment: Dedham resident Susan Butler Walko joined the meeting to state her opposition to Critical Race Theory and the concept of equity within DEI guidelines.

Approval of June and July Minutes: Minutes were approved.

Elections: Joe Borsellino reminded the group that votes will soon be taken on the Commission's three leadership positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk.) Those positions are currently held by Joe Borsellino (chair), Diane Loud (vice chair) and Margaret Adams (clerk)

Vote on Article Amendment re: Non-Resident Agency Appointments to HRC: Group voted in favor of moving this amendment forward and placing it for discussion and vote at Fall Town Meeting. If passed, the amendment would allow non-Dedham residents to be appointed to the HRC positions reserved for the Council on Aging, the Commission on Disabilities, the Police Department, the School Department, the Youth Commission, and the Housing Commission.

De-Brief on National Night Out: Mike Buckley attended most of the National Night Out activities held in early August and reported that all were successful. The HRC co-sponsored an event at the Endicott Estate held by Dedham's Anti-Racism Coalition.

No Hate Flag Rollout: At last month's meeting the group had brainstormed ways to celebrate the hanging of a banner reading "Hate Has No Place in Dedham. All Are Welcome Here" at Town Hall. Chris Kelly shared Public Information Officer Amanda Smith's subsequent suggestion that the banner be brought to different areas throughout the town for photo opportunities with groups representing the diversity of our town. The photos could then be shared on social media and other media and also compiled into a video. Due to increasing uncertainty about COVID restrictions on gatherings, it was determined that this could be a very effective and lasting alternative method of promoting and celebrating the banner. Chris will reach out to Amanda to coordinate and update the group. Members volunteered to coordinate with different groups ranging from police and fire department to veterans, seniors, PTOs, town committees, and other town groups and organizations.

South Shore Human Rights Advocates Picnic: Joe reminded the group about the August 22 gathering of South Shore and Cape Cod Human Rights organizations; HRC members are invited to attend with their families.

"I Am Dedham" for August and September: Two guests have been secured for the August 24 taping: Gus Burkett who oversees diversity training at MIT, and Charles Boateng, Dedham's newly appointed Drug Free Communities Coordinator. Diane Barry Preston will interview

Charles. Chris will ask Margaret Adams if she would like to interview Gus, if not, he will do the interview. The September episode is tentatively planned to focus on the Commission on Disabilities and differently-abled residents.

Misinformation re: Critical Race Theory: In response to inaccurate comments, Joe noted that the HRC has not taken any formal position on CRT in Dedham and that CRT has not previously been discussed by the group.

Planning for 5th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration: Due to increasing concerns about the COVID Delta variant, the 2022 MLK celebration will be virtual for a second year in a row. Possible keynote speakers were discussed, including a prominent Dedham resident.

Dedham Day: Joe has reserved a table for the HRC at this year's Dedham Day celebration, set for the last weekend in September.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m.