

Pelham Anti Racism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: 3 /22 /2021

Meeting Facilitator: Roy Regozin

Meeting Note Taker: Anne Stoddard

Members in Attendance: Anne Stoddard, Charlie Lynch, Jacqueline Faison, Jessie Jean-Louis, Karen Ribeiro, Matteo Ramos-Mucci, Roy Regozin

Members Absent: Dan Robb, Pat Schumm (two members have resigned since the last meeting: Joe Davis and Jake Klar)

Additional attendees from the public: None

Op
ening details: Roy opened the meeting at 7:03PM and read the remote meeting script.
The minutes of the meeting held on February 22, 2021 were approved unanimously.

Review of the proposed anti-discrimination by-law.

Charlie reported that since Joe Davis has resigned he is the only person working on this and asked if anyone else was interested in participating. Matteo expressed interest. Charlie has reached out to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) regarding local anti-discrimination bylaws but hasn't heard back from them yet. He also has done some research into bylaws in other towns. He was concerned about the aspect of imposing fines. Many other bylaws establish a committee to hear complaints.

We discussed the timeline for presenting the bylaw to the select board and at Town Meeting. We agreed it would be better to have a draft of something formal even though that probably means that it will not be ready for Spring Town Meeting.

Charlie mentioned that MCAD offers anti-discrimination training but it appears to be primarily for employers. He will ask whether they offer training for municipalities or groups like ours.

Update on the Anti-racism 30 Day Challenge. Jessie reported that she is still working on it but that it is challenging in its intensity - both in the difficulty of the material and in the amount of work involved. Anne and Roy are both also plugging along.

Jessie mentioned that the School Book Group is reading "This Book is Anti-Racist" and the 6th grade is also participating. She suggested that as another, perhaps less intense, option for those wanting to learn more about anti-racism. Like the 30 Day Challenge, journaling is a part of this activity, too.

Working Group Reports:

1. OUTREACH (Roy, Dan) Roy reported that the link to the Government Alliance for the Human Rights Commission requires an amherstma.gov email to participate. He is exploring other outreach opportunities. Other programs he has found include:

- free program through the University of S. Florida on diversity, equity and inclusion in the workforce that is offered Wednesdays 5 - 7PM.
- Sojourner Truth School
- Healing Racism Institute of the Pioneer Valley

He and Pat Schumm attended a 2-day workshop “Undoing Racism” that he found very valuable. We discussed making a recommendation to the Select Board that all elected town officials should be required to get some anti-racism training. Roy will investigate what an appropriate training might be.

2. HISTORY (Karen, Dan, Jacqueline) No update.

3. EDUCATION (Roy, Pat, Jessie, Jacqueline) See the discussion of the 30 Day Challenge above. Jessie said that the elementary school will be opening for in person learning in April. Children in families choosing to remain remote will be assigned to a class in Amherst. She mentioned that enrollment in Pelham is way down which will have a negative impact on the school budget for next year.

4. GOVERNANCE (Charlie) See discussion of bylaw above

5. HOUSING (Charlie, Anne, Dan) Charlie has reached out to Abundant Housing MA, a group that works to promote more diverse, less segregated housing particularly in sub-urban communities. He will set up a zoom meeting for this group with the Housing working group.

Matteo reported that the Habitat for Humanity houses on Amherst Rd are moving forward. Ground breaking will happen soon and the new families should be able to move in in about a year. The affordable housing project at 20-22 Amherst Rd (40B project) is also moving forward. It is controversial because of environmental concerns. We discussed what the ARAC can do to support this project.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY (Anne, Jessie, Karen) This working group had been trying to set up a meeting with people from Shutesbury and Leverett to discuss common interests/concerns. Michael Hussin learned that Shutesbury wants to wait until they complete the process of addressing their town specific policing needs before meeting with other towns. Michael received a list of questions regarding public safety that Shutesbury is using to guide their discussions. We may adapt some of their questions to form an agenda for when we meet with Chief Thoman.

Closing details: Meeting adjourned at 8:32PM

Next Meeting Date: April 19, 7:30PM

Next Meeting Facilitator: Jessie Jean-Louis

Next Meeting Note Taker: Matteo Ramos-Mucci