



HRAC Meeting minutes

Date: August 18th, 2020

Scribe: Claudio Ramírez

Adequate Notice Statement

Adequate notice was provided. Notice of the meeting was published in news outlets.

Call to Order

Alexis Jemal called to order the regular meeting of the HRAC at **7:00pm** on **August 18th, 2020** at **ZOOM** and led reading of the mission statement.

Roll Call

Alexis Jemal conducted a roll call. The following persons were present.

Attendees: Alexis Jemal, Cheryl Swift, Laurie Clancy, Anna Qiang, Chris Battiloro, Debbie Goddard, Ethan Prosnit, Gary Timm, Jenny Tannenbaum, Lee Schaefer, Paul Pinieiro, Claudio Ramirez

The following persons were absent.

Absentees: Michelle Coyne, Varsha Iyer, Rodney Ross, Rami Sarabi

Approval of minutes from last meeting

Cheryl Swift read the minutes from the last meeting. The minutes were

- **Approved as read**
- Revised (list changes)

All were in favor of approving notes, no revisions were made

Agenda

Committee Reports

a. Information Gathering & Dissemination

- Debbie Goddard brought up connecting with relevant police reports, and Chris Battiloro, Westfield Police Chief, wants to connect with the public more by sending a message that progress is always being made. Chris often stays one step ahead and makes press releases to keep people informed, and urges us to report any bias incidents in order to hold people accountable for their actions. All releases go to Kim Ford (communications@westfieldnj.gov) and to access them, just ask her to be on the distribution list for the press releases.
- Debbie Goddard asked Anna Qiang (a rising senior in high school) how she thinks we should connect with young people/people under 18, Anna suggested Instagram stories as they've been rising in popularity.

b. Community Education & Engagement

- Jenny Tannenbaum explained the goals of the committee, such as working in partnership with the schools and religious institutions. She explained that they are aware of the most recent site of hateful vandalism in Brightwood Park, and they're going to examine how they can create art that's against hate and bias. Every time an MLK statue gets taken down it will be put back up.

c. Practices, Policies and Culture

- Alexis Jemal went over changes we'd want to see at the institutional level. She asked if regarding bias crimes, should the perpetrator receive a criminal justice response or a restorative justice response instead. Chris Battiloro explained how bias crimes are handled, and how with repeated offenders, although they do have to be recorded into the criminal justice system, he's open to discussion on ways to educate someone instead, especially juveniles. He says that they could involve the county prosecutor's office in order to determine whether someone gets recorded or not.
- Cheryl Swift asked Paul Pinieiro what he's doing, not on an institutional level, but on a local level such as with teachers. He explained how they've seen many biased, anti-Semitic, and racist graffiti. In recent years the curriculum has been reviewed to make sure it aligns with state guidelines. Last

year they brought to the board a course based on privilege, and though it created discourse, it is on its way. He talks about how they've integrated curriculums based on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism with the Commission on Holocaust Education. Progress was being made, but after the rise of racial tensions, they re-evaluated some, and currently they have an initiative in the works, which helps educate teachers so they can better talk to students about racism and anti-Semitism, which is funded by EdFund. It will be launched with a book all educators will be reading, and they will be studying alongside a professional historian that studies race relations, so that they will get a feel on how comfortable educators are with talking about these subjects. They will be continuing to reinforce it past November, and they have plans for different levels of the community.

- Lee Schaefer (co-chair of public arts commission) talked about how we can all partner together to challenge hate in different aspects. She explains that there has been a very positive response to the Art Takes Flight Project downtown.
- Anna Qiang explains how the school newspaper can be helpful as they can help advertise the cause and have dialogue circles with high school students.
- Cheryl Swift suggested we can tap into our religious organisations since many people, especially the youths, attend Church/Temple very often.
- Alexis Jemal asked Chris Battiloro if the police attend bias training, and he responded with yes. Every officer has been subject to implicit bias training annually for the last two years. They have recently focused on handling situations regarding people with mental illness or special needs.

Unfinished HRAC Business/Open Issues Notes & Discussion

New HRAC Business Notes & Discussion

- Determining what to do to replace the latest hateful vandalism/how to involve the community

Decisions Made/ Voted Items

- 1. Last meeting's minutes were approved

Action Items

Topic	Item	Assigned to
Research	Tapping into religious organizations to reach the youths	Everyone/Research Committee
Information gathering	Determining what to do to replace the latest hateful vandalism/how to involve the community/gathering statistics	Community Education & Engagement Committee

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 1st

Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Organize (possibly) quarterly meetings for liaisons
- Training for Slack

Adjournment

Alexis Jemal adjourned the meeting at 8:02 pm