



Town of Lexington Human Rights Committee

Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, Dec 13, 2023
Conducted in remotely on Zoom

Call to Order 8:55 am

LHRC MEMBERS PRESENT

Christina Lin, Chair (CL); Stephanie Hsu, Vice-Chair (SH); Lieutenant Colleen Dunbar - Town of Lexington Police (CD); Larry Freeman - Lexington Public School District (LF) (left at 9:59am); Lois Bruss (LB); Amber Iqbal (AI) (arrived at 9:06am)

Absent: Stephanie Stonefish Ryan (SSR)

The minutes recorded by Stephanie Hsu, LHRC Vice-Chair

1. Minutes Approval - For our November minutes we will need new members to review the video or transcript in order for us to have a quorum for approval since several members are new. Moving forward we will have to share the Clerk's responsibility until one of our newer members is comfortable taking minutes.
2. Reminder for each of us to submit a short bio sharing who we are, why we are on the LHRC, how we are involved in the community. This will be on the website so that others can get to know us.
3. **Proposal to hold 2x per month** (one 90 min and one 60 min) or have a plan for a longer 2-2.5 hour meeting once a month. The benefit of 2x/month is we can cancel the shorter meeting if it isn't necessary. But currently, we are not able to get through discussions and issues within the 90 min window.
 - a. Days/times for second meeting
 - b. Pros
 - i. We can cancel the shorter meeting if it isn't necessary.
 - ii. It is hard to get everything done in one meeting, and this would allow us to prioritize the focus for each meeting.
 - c. Comments - Committee members agreed that two meetings make sense, but we need to ensure that we keep to the allotted time, so that we don't end up with two longer meetings.
 - d. CL made a motion to add a second monthly meeting for the LHRC to take place on the 4th Wednesday at 9:00am, ending at 10am. LB second - Passed 6-0-0.
4. **Welcome new LHRC members** – Welcome Lois Bruss and Stephanie Stonefish Ryan. SSR isn't able to be here today. SH & CL will meet with her separately.
 - a. **Introduced our liaisons** - Mark Sandeen (SB), Hemali Shaw (CEO), Eileen Jay (SC), Shaun Grady (CoD)

5. **Pathways to LHRC goals by July 2024** - See attached Goals presentation - our second meeting in January we will be diving into this. We used to focus on 3 programs – No Hate November, MLK Day Conversation on Race, Race Amity Day – Two of these programs have been smaller ones. We will be looking into what programming makes sense for us to meet our goal.
 - a. Our multi-year goal is to increase the strength of the community by reducing divisive rhetoric. Only when we are able to see that we have more in common than not, are we able to unlock possibilities for a shared future together. How are we going to achieve this goal?
 - i. Understanding Hate speech and balancing it with freedom of speech
 - ii. Building skills for difficult conversations
 - b. Suggested reading/workshops
 - i. When Getting Along Is Not Enough – Maureen Walker Ph.D.
 - ii. Loretta Ross – Calling In
 - iii. Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships – Marshall Rosenberg
 - c. CL & SH suggest that we group committee members into groups of 2-3 to discuss pathway to goals (AI, SH, SSR) (LF, LB, CD) – CL will check in with each group. This will be to bring forward proposals for how to meet our goals, as well as other ideas for who we can partner with and who our audience is. Committee supports this idea. Another suggestion is allowing MS/HS students an opportunity to be a LHRC member for a day. Could we have a book club to dive deeper into these subjects. The goal is to have steps in place by June/July, so we can plan accordingly for the fall.
6. **CEL grant.** We need someone to take the lead on writing the grant. It’s okay to pull help from the community. It doesn’t have to be entirely done only by LHRC (2 people - SH & SSR). SH will look into the feasibility of this either for this cycle or the next one.
7. **Connecting with community stakeholders** – we would like to start having more liaison roles in the community and to help build relationships and know where we can collaborate with others. Liaison responsibility is to check in with their group to see what they are doing and let them know what we are doing. We are encouraging a “habit” of coming to us when there are opportunities to work together or when issues arise. You don’t have to have a natural affinity with these groups, but it is an opportunity for you to explore and develop a relationship with others. Some of the groups are listed here: ABCL, CAAL, CALex, IAL, BALex, LICA, SEPAC, LexPride, Housing Partnership, Council on Aging, Commission on Disability, Collaborative Reform Group.
8. **Building Permit Applications process** - Who can look at the Planning Board - Building permit applications? This is based on Abby McCabe’s presentation in November. The Planning Board is asking the LHRC to review applications from an equity lens. AI and CL will look into this further.
9. **Workgroup updates**

- a. MLK Day, January 15 - Community Conversation on Race – We need as many members as possible available by 9am to assist with the program.
- b. MCAS Disparities workgroup – Recent MCAS numbers show a discrepancy in performance for our Black/African American students. The workgroup will be focusing on external factors that may be influencing this disparity, while the school is looking at the internal causes.
- c. Resume Racial Disparities Subcommittee meetings - need 1 LHRC member volunteer – will discuss further at next meeting – email CL interest.

10. Member updates

- a. **CL** - Menorah Lighting – Gathering Thursday, December 14, Emory Park – celebration for the last day of Hanukkah. Sponsored by Temple Emunah, Temple Isaiah, and the Chabad Center. **LUAA** encouraged participation in a conversation sponsored by the ADL – Shining a Light on Hate
- b. **SH** - Collaborative Reform Group (CRG) are refining our charge and working on our next conversation. There is a Training Active Bystander workshop in Mandarin, December 13. There are two upcoming ABCL events – January 4, unveiling of the newest banners & January 14, MLK Celebration Concert.
- c. **LF** – SC working with consultants about closing academic gaps, particularly around literacy – final report TBD.
- d. **CD** – Incidents around bias and hate please encourage them to report to LPD.

11. Unexpected Items Not Reasonably Anticipated in Advance

12. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

13. Meeting Adjourned at 10:18 am