



**CITY OF EASTHAMPTON**  
50 Payson Avenue Easthampton, MA 01027  
413-529-1400

**Community Relations Committee**  
**January 11, 2022 Minutes of Work Session**

Meeting held remotely due to COVID 19 Pandemic Restrictions.

1. The meeting recording was initiated at 6:05 p.m. and Rebecca began by greeting everyone and taking a roll call. Present were: Margaret Kierstein, Myra Oyedemi, Emily Britton, Gaby Stevenson and Rebecca Passa. Jon Norman arrived at 6:11 p.m. and, as she indicated, Gaby Stevenson had to leave early at 6:34 p.m. No one was absent.
  - A. Next Meeting. Because Gaby would be leaving early, the work session began with a discussion of meeting dates. Some discussion ensued regarding the currently small size of the Community Relations Committee and how much work each member is willing to carry. In terms of meeting attendance, Myra pointed out that the overall meeting is or can be a place where we determine how to share out the work into subcommittees (it isn't necessarily detrimental to the group if a member cannot come, especially when the member is participating in other ways). After further discussion, subsequent meeting dates of January 26, 2022 and February 23, 2022 were chosen. These are two Wednesdays, although the committee will reconsider its meeting date by late February.
  - B. Consideration of Officers. Emily proposed that Myra Oyedemi and herself serve as the new co-chairs and Rebecca Passa continue as secretary of the Community Relations Committee. The committee will vote on these nominations at our next regular meeting.
  - C. Plan of Action. Rebecca reported that a Draft Plan of Action had been provided to the committee from Darryck Dean of the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service. During our work with Darryck, a majority of members preferred that the CRC serve in the "Facilitation" role, promoting cooperation in the community through education, fostering awareness and similar efforts.

Now that we have feedback from the Mayor, expressing an interest in the CRC being recipients of data, it was noted that this contemplates some CRC service in the "Advisory" role. Rebecca noted that the Mayor also spoke of supporting this Advisory role with staff and indicated her view that this makes a difference. Myra suggested, and Margaret agreed that it would be a good idea to continue with what we've worked on at the present time, get it off the ground and that, once there is staff support (and possibly new members), the CRC can consider other work down the line. Discussion ensued including anticipated outreach to existing organizations that we have already had on our agenda and in light of the Mayor's suggesting that we

work with other city committees such as the Easthampton Commission on Disability. The Mayor also suggested organizations including the Easthampton Healthy Youth Coalition. Emily and Myra both expressed support for pursuing outreach work. Emily noted that, when the Mayor hires support for data review, this could also be supported by subcommittee work. A subcommittee could review materials and report back to the main committee.

- D. Bylaws. Myra also reminded the committee that the CRC had some previous thought of creating Bylaws or a set of processes to help us manage our operations. Rebecca and Margaret volunteered to be on a bylaws subcommittee. Procedural concerns mentioned throughout the meeting included best practices for public speak, improving the cadence of our meetings, clarifying the onboarding of new members, etc.
  - E. Undoing Racism. Rebecca expressed the hope that the Forum Subcommittee, in its work, is considering steps to take advantage of the “Undoing Racism” programming that has been brought to the City. Ideas were shared on ways in which it could be supported and the potential for inviting members of the community. Myra helpfully offered to do some outreach with regard to the “Undoing Racism” effort and find out more about its timeline.
  - F. Proposed Videos. Action steps the CRC currently has been pursuing includes outreach to Easthampton Media regarding the creation of introductory videos. With regard to technical considerations, Rebecca thought that – now that the City e-mail and even meetings is based in Google – the CRC may have its own YouTube channel to which the CRC could upload its own content. Rebecca will take a look, try it out and report back to Emily.
  - G. Follow-up Meeting with Darryck Dean. Rebecca reported that Darryck Dean had requested a follow-up meeting with the CRC. The members expressed interest in his joining us for our meeting in February.
  - H. List for Community Outreach. Myra asked Rebecca if the existing list could be updated and shared, which Rebecca will do.
2. Next Meeting. As indicated above, the CRC set its next two meetings on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.; and Wednesday, February 23, 2022 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
  3. Adjourn. On a motion made by Rebecca with a second by Margaret, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn with 5 in favor, Gaby having left prior to the vote. Adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca L. Passa, Secretary