



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

Community Relations Committee
January 26, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Meeting held remotely due to COVID 19 Pandemic Restrictions.

1. Start Recording/Call to Order. 6:04 p.m.
2. Preliminary Announcements. Rebecca Passa announced her receipt, as secretary of the CRC, of e-mail from City Clerk Barbara LaBombard and Gabriela Stevenson. Barbara confirmed both the appointment of Dr. Ebenezer Afarikumah to the CRC as well as receipt of Gaby Stevenson's resignation. The CRC also received a copy of Gaby's resignation directly, in which she explained that she is facing schedule changes due to her employment. Rebecca noted that, since these changes are in effect now, they will be reflected in the roll call.
3. Roll Call. Members present: Emily Britton, Margaret Kierstein, Myra Oyedemi, Ebenezer Afarikumah, and Rebecca Passa. Jon Norman joined late at 6:21 p.m.
4. Approval of Minutes. Minutes had been proposed for the CRC meetings voted on below.
 - A. December 28, 2021. On motion by Emily Britton and seconded by Margaret Kierstein, the minutes were approved unanimously.
 - B. Work Session of January 11, 2022. On motion by Myra Oyedemi and seconded by Margaret Kierstein, the minutes were approved 4 in favor and one abstention.
5. Election of Officers. Rebecca reminded the committee of proposals from the CRC's work session earlier in January, including the nomination of Myra Oyedemi and Emily Britton as Co-chairs.
 - A. On motion by Margaret Kierstein and seconded by Rebecca Passa, a unanimous vote was passed electing Myra Oyedemi and Emily Britton as Co-chairs of the committee.
 - B. On motion by Myra Oyedemi and seconded by Emily Britton, Rebecca Passa was elected as Secretary of the committee on a vote of 4 in favor and one abstention.
6. Consideration of policy relative to the "public speak" portion of the regular sessions of the CRC. A number of thoughts were raised including (a) following any rules and/or precedent set by the City Council in order to be consistent; and (b) referring further ideas and remarks to a Bylaws Subcommittee, who can then include a proposal for discussion

as part of a proposed set of Bylaws. It was noted that a report on bylaws is expected as a later item on the agenda.

7. Announcements. Further to the “preliminary announcements” already made, Rebecca announced, based on her correspondence with the Easthampton Police Department (EPD), a new police liaison in addition to Lieutenant Dennis Scribner. This liaison is Officer Mitchell Cichy. Officer Cichy has been designated as the Community Resource Officer at the EPD and as the EPD primary point of contact with the CRC. Rebecca read Lieutenant Scribner’s introduction of Officer Cichy as well as Officer Cichy’s own correspondence, indicating that he was “elated to be given the opportunity to act as one of the Liaisons representing the Police Department and assisting the CRC Committee in the very important role they play in our City.” The committee expressed interest in inviting Officer Cichy to a meeting for introductions, although not immediately since we also have scheduled Darryck Dean to follow up with us in February.
8. Public Speak. No member of the public took advantage of this opportunity to speak to the committee.
9. Reports and follow-up from CRC subcommittees and/or other CRC members, as follows:
 - A. Report re: WinterFest, including but not limited to materials to be provided by Emily and Myra. Emily reported that WinterFest is set to take place on Saturday, February 12th. She said that all outdoor events are happening, while the indoor events have been canceled due to the COVID pandemic. Emily and Myra are planning to attend, with Emily providing a table and maybe a tablecloth. Any and all other CRC members are welcome to come to the parking lot of 50 Payson Avenue to join Emily and Myra on February 12th.
 - B. Action points from our strategic planning sessions with Darryck Dean:
 - (i) Report re: introductory videos of City committee chairs and/or committee members for the City website. Rebecca noted that she tested the CRC YouTube account through the City, which worked fine. That said, Emily recommended tabling the work on these videos for a few months until after priorities including WinterFest are either complete or under control. Ultimately, the Video Subcommittee will need to consider interview questions to be posed, and some clarification is needed regarding the agreement Easthampton Media has with the City and how the CRC work may or may not fit in to that agreement and/or be funded.
 - (ii) Report of the Forum Subcommittee regarding its planning including but not limited to:
 - (a) The possibility of supporting the Undoing Racism work. Myra reported that she communicated with Dr. Lomax Campbell, who indicated he would be happy to work directly with the CRC to coordinate in-person or virtual follow-up sessions to the Undoing Racism workshops administered by his Third-Eye Network. He said that March is a great timeframe for planning purposes and sent over the registration list for the previous sessions in order that outreach can be done either by the CRC or by the

Mayor's office. For additional workshops, Dr. Campbell indicated that we would need to begin planning three months in advance in order to have enough time for proper planning, including logistics and marketing. Myra reported that he also recommended that we schedule a time during the first weeks of February to touch base for 60 to 90 minutes. Myra also had some questions about funding that were addressed later in the meeting.

(b) Neighbors getting to know neighbors. Rebecca didn't think there would be a committee report on this topic, but it is one of the recommendations from Darryck Dean that we would like to keep on our "radar".

(iii) Follow-up re: Outreach to other groups and organizations, whether public or private and including but not limited to review of organization list and draft "script" for outreach. Rebecca reported that she reached out to Nicole Hendricks, who had led the Mayor's Pledge Work Group, to confirm permission for the use of a list of community businesses and organizations that had been created by the Work Group. This information is now included on a spreadsheet that has been shared with members of the CRC. Rebecca will also share it with our new member, Ebenezer. Committee members are invited to work with Rebecca on accessing the spreadsheet, should there be any difficulty doing so.

C. Report of the Bylaws subcommittee. Rebecca reported that she searched for an example of a set of bylaws used by an actual human rights committee and has begun to adapt it for the CRC. She sent a draft to Margaret for her input.

10. CRC Consideration of above reports from subcommittees and/or members.

A. Winterfest. While hearing the above reports, one question was funding. Rebecca recalled from our communications with the Mayor that an account exists for the CRC and the procedure for requesting funds from the account was to provide information to the Mayor's Office regarding what items we are requesting be paid. For WinterFest, Rebecca therefore recommended going through the Mayor's Office to propose a budget and request funds, which may include reimbursements to Emily. Some discussion ensued of what food items the CRC might make available for WinterFest. The discussion included the possibility of buying a large, insulated thermos that the CRC would then have available for this and subsequent events. Later in the meeting, Emily shared some language that is anticipated to be included on the WinterFest advertising page. Some discussion also took place with regard to simplifying methods for the public to share their suggestions for the CRC, such as scanning a QR code and being able to enter suggestions on the City website. Some of these technical details could continue to be considered and worked out in the future.

B. Regarding neighbors getting to know neighbors, Eben recounted efforts he had made to get to know his neighbors. He wrote to 30 of his neighbors with some questions: "What do you like about your neighborhood?" "How could we improve our neighborhood?" So far, he has received one response although he is waiting for others. He reported on the responses, suggesting that these may help the committee get to know what the Easthampton community is looking for.

- C. Regarding Undoing Racism and funding for that work, Rebecca looked through notes of our past meeting and reported that the Mayor had said funding to date for the Undoing Racism work has come under “Economic Development.” The Mayor had also stated it would continue to be part of Economic Development for the foreseeable future.

The committee then focused on the follow-up work with Dr. Lomax Campbell. Myra asked whether the committee preferred that we all meet with Dr. Campbell, or should the subcommittee of Myra, Emily and Jon meet with him? Myra volunteered to ask Dr. Campbell whether he has a preference as to whether the meeting should include a quorum and be a public meeting, or whether meeting with the subcommittee would be preferable.

11. Follow-up re: CRC statement on incident at Native American Heritage Month including but not limited to procedures for CRC responses in general. The committee noted that proposed statements had been exchanged among a subcommittee that had volunteered to look at this question. Myra volunteered to take a look, to merge the proposed letters and bring it back to the CRC at our next meeting.
12. Follow-up re: suggested action point on CRC members getting to know each other on a deeper level. As the CRC reviewed the work of the subcommittees, a suggestion came up regarding scheduling a special Zoom meeting for the sole purpose of getting to know each other. Rebecca offered a separate Zoom Pro account for this purpose that does not belong to the City. Rebecca will propose dates through a Doodle poll.
13. Review of current subcommittees and any additional ones that may be necessary, including what their membership is and what each and all of the work tasks are.

Myra listed the subcommittees as follows:

- Forum Subcommittee, which is tasked with community events and educationals.
- Outreach coordinator or subcommittee, whose role would be as a liaison with existing committees and organizations in the community.
- Bylaws Subcommittee, to create a living document about public speak, votes, definitions, defining roles and rules.
- Onboarding or Welcoming Subcommittee
- Finance and Budgeting Subcommittee
- Digital Communications (part of outreach? including Facebook?)
- Recruitment or Membership Subcommittee

Myra offered to create a Google form listing the subcommittees that CRC members could access and mention their interest in one or more of the committees on the list. Rebecca offered to create a spreadsheet on the City Google account and share it with Myra and all committee members, in order to assist Myra in creating an accessible list.

14. Next meeting dates: The CRC confirmed that its next meeting will be February 23, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. It was decided that subsequent meetings will be on the fourth Wednesday of each month, with the March meeting being on March 23rd.

15. Adjourn. On a motion made by Myra with a second by Margaret, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn with 6 in favor. Adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca L. Passa, Secretary