

**Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (HRDEIC) | Special Meeting Minutes
December 27, 2022**

This special meeting was called to discuss recent incidents in Wayland, focusing on the racist graffiti found on November 21, 2022, by the Town Pool near the Wayland High School entrance.

Members present via Zoom: Yamini Ranjan (HRDEIC Chair, chairing the meeting), Karen Blumenfeld (Vice Chair), Mei-Ling Ellerman, Janot Mendler de Suarez, Heather Pineault, Jessica Schendel, Yauwu Tang, Steven Wynne (Clerk, taking minutes), John Bugbee (Acting Town Manager), and Ed Burman (Acting Chief of Police)

1. Call to Order: Heather read the Indigenous Land Acknowledgement. Yamini verified a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

2. Public Comment:

- Frances Pollitt noted that all Wayland administrative staff must undergo anti-racism or sensitivity training and requested that the HRDEIC ask the Select Board to ensure that all town employees be held accountable for completing the training.
- Mary Ann Borkowski condemned the racist graffiti and noted it was not the first such incident in Wayland. She hoped the HRDEIC would consider recommendations such as: conducting a town-wide equity audit, diversifying Town leadership, hiring a Director of Diversity who would participate in the School Committee and Select Board, advocating diversity training for all town leadership, creating a town committee to work on community activities, creating a protocol for addressing race/hate incidents in schools, and only hiring school staff who have a proven commitment diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Jeff Kurtz recommended that any HRDEIC statement ask the Select Board to take specific action.
- HRDEIC member Janot read an email sent to the committee from Wayland resident Bakul Wadgaonkar that included a call to create a sub-committee or task force to focus on education on racism and meaningful actions in our school and Town to prevent hateful behavior.
- Dovie King spoke about being a Black Wayland parent whose family has been directly impacted by racist incidents in town. She quoted from a letter she wrote in response to the graffiti, stating that the racist message in the graffiti was intended to produce fear. She said that we need to use the HRDEIC's power to move things forward to the Select Board to make changes.

3. Discussion of recent incidents in Town, focusing on the racist incident at WHS, with a possible vote on an HRDEIC public statement and /or recommendations to the Select Board: Yamini noted our goal this evening is to vote on a letter to be sent to the Select Board. Karen shared a draft of a letter written by Mei-Ling, Yamini, and herself. It is included in this meeting's public packet. The committee reviewed the letter in detail, including the nine recommendations. Members discussed edits and additions. In response to questions about the [Recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes, Nov 19, 2018](#), Acting Chief of Police Burman commented that, since the racist graffiti incident, he has researched several Massachusetts communities that have designated a Civil Rights Officer. He will work with the new Town Manager to appoint a Civil Rights Officer and provide appropriate training so they can be the point person for investigating hate incidents/crimes in Wayland and collaborate with Town committees, including HRDEIC.

Steve made a motion that Karen, Mei-Ling, and Yamini will finalize the letter based on the committee's review at this meeting. Janot seconded. The roll call vote had unanimous approval.

Yamini shared that a person in Wayland recently directed verbal abuse and racially-inflected comments toward her. She read a statement about the impact of this experience and what she learned from it. She stated that she has received significant support from her friends, confirming that she had not done

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anything to incite the comments directed at her. She noted that our meeting tonight is dedicated to people in Wayland who have been targeted by similar incidents but have not reported them. Acting Chief of Police Ed Burman provided an update regarding the racist graffiti incident. He noted that the Police Department has given the investigation the highest priority.

- Immediately after the incident, the Police Department released information to the public, including a press release condemning the action.
- The department sought guidance and support from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) on best practices for working with school students and the public.
- Three police detectives are assigned to the case, and the department is coordinating with the Massachusetts State Police and the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office.
- The department has checked 100+ ring cameras in the surrounding neighborhood, videos from the high school, and police cruisers for evidence. Unfortunately, the area in question is very dark and not lit. There were no cameras in the specific area.
- Investigators are researching several leads. Interviews are being conducted.
- The department set up a reverse 911 police announcement this week. In addition, an anonymous tip phone line was set up, and all calls received are being investigated.
- The department will continue to give out information to the public as things progress; they are creating a timeline for continuing communication.
- Anyone in Wayland should reach out to the department regarding any incident or with any concerns. The department will respond.
- All members of the Wayland Police department went through implicit bias training in 2022. The department is open to ongoing training of its staff, as well as outreach and conversations with the Wayland community. The department is aware that some Wayland residents from other cultures and countries do not trust the police.
- The department is actively seeking to hire people of color and of varied backgrounds. He noted that Wayland, like most communities in the US, is facing a severe shortage of candidates. Wayland is utilizing Massachusetts' Four Plus One program to recruit college students, hiring two officers from Fitchburg State University with potential candidates from Merrimack College.
- In February 2023, Wayland will be offering a Citizens Police Academy six-week program for residents to learn more about the workings of the Wayland Police Department.

4. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance: Yauwu stated the Wayland Chinese Association will have a Chinese American New Year celebration on January 28, 2023, and asked the HRDEIC to co-sponsor. By consensus, the committee agreed to co-sponsor. Karen also noted that the Wayland School Committee reached out about collaborating and joining their meeting on January 4, 2023. Yamini and/or Karen will summarize the HRDEIC's recent letters to the Select Board during the public comment period of the School Committee's January 4th meeting.

5. Adjourn. Jessica moved to adjourn, Karen seconded, and a unanimous vote was taken to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Next Meeting Date: January 17, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Document discussed during meeting:

- Draft letter to Select Board on racist graffiti