

WAYLAND HUMAN RIGHTS, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE (HRDEIC)

Chair: Yamini Ranjan

Vice-Chair: Karen Blumenfeld

Secretary: Jessica Schendel

Committee Members: Mary Ann Borkowski, Mei-Ling Ellerman, Carlin Gruber, Eunjee Kang, Janot Mendler de Suarez, Heather Pineault, Kanmani Sekhar, Yauwu Tang, Chloe Voight

Ex-Officio: John Bugbee, Assistant Town Manager

Committee's Purpose and Duties:

The HRDEIC serves in an advisory role to the Select Board. Its [charge](#) is to strive to ensure that all persons enjoy the equal opportunity to participate in all local affairs, free from discrimination, disrespect, bigotry, and other forms of microaggressions, macroaggressions, hatred and oppression. The Committee's primary duties are summarized below in italics.

Summary of Activities and Accomplishments in FY 23 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023):

1. Create action plans and periodically conduct equity assessments

- Recommended to the Select Board that the Town conduct a community equity assessment. An equity assessment is a learning journey to assess policies, programs, practices, power dynamics, equity mindset and culture throughout the Town. The goal is to understand what is helping and what is hindering the Town from achieving its goal of being an equitable and inclusive community. The Select Board approved the Committee's recommendation and allocated \$100,000 to fund the assessment.

2. Serve as a portal for community members' concerns, complaints or questions

- Continued to make progress toward launching a community reporting line.

3. Recommend resolutions, policies, programs and initiatives to promote diversity, inclusion, awareness and anti-discrimination

- At the Select Board's request, [proposed a policy](#) to help ensure that holiday displays and activities in Town-owned spaces promote a culture of diversity, equity and belonging.
- Recommended to the Select Board that the Town offer a Community-SPIRIT program in collaboration with the Department of Justice Community Relations Service. A [SPIRIT program](#) is a full-day program that brings together community members and leaders, representing a wide range of stakeholders, for community building, healing and problem-solving. The Select Board approved the Committee's recommendation and agreed to co-sponsor the program.
- Issued a public statement on [reproductive healthcare as a human right](#) following the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision.
- Assigned two HRDEIC members to collaborate on an ongoing basis with two School Committee members to enhance the School Committee's focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.
- Successfully encouraged at least four Black, Indigenous and People of Color to join Town boards and committees.

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4. Promote an understanding of diverse cultures within the Town

- Proudly sponsored Wayland's first [Multicultural Festival](#). More than 800 people attended the Festival in the Wayland High School Field House. Through a wide selection of activities, performances and exhibitions, attendees explored and celebrated the traditions, customs, and flavors of the many cultures in Wayland. The Festival was co-sponsored by the Mass and Wayland Cultural Councils and 13 local cultural and other organizations. The Festival was made possible thanks to the generous support of many local businesses and volunteers.
- Co-sponsored lectures at the Wayland Free Public Library on topics related to the Committee's mission. As part of the Library's Great Presenters Series, the HRDEIC chair and vice-chair [presented](#) the Committee's work to the community.
- Publicly read an [Indigenous Land Acknowledgment](#) at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. This was the first time an Indigenous Land Acknowledgment had ever been read at a Wayland Town Meeting.
- Hosted High School Principal Allyson Mizoguchi, and Middle School Principal Betsy Gavron and teacher Jada Williams, who shared work being done to address diversity, equity, belonging and social justice.
- Featured Pride posters on Town signboards during Pride Month in June, for the second year.

5. Serve as a resource to the Select Board concerning issues that challenge any individual or group's enjoyment of their basic human rights in the Town

- Recommended in a [Letter to the Select Board](#) ways to make the Police Department and Town safer for women in light of the investigation and resignation of the previous police chief.
- Recommended in a [Letter to the Select Board](#) ways to bring a diversity, equity and belonging lens to situations involving racial differences, including but not limited to the investigation of Schools Superintendent Dr. Omar Easy.
- Recommended in a [Letter to the Select Board](#) concrete actions to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in light of the racist graffiti incident targeting Schools Superintendent Dr. Omar Easy.

6. Collaborate with representatives from historically marginalized groups

- See #4, Multicultural Festival.

7. Collaborate with other towns' human rights committees

- An HRDEIC representative attended monthly meetings of the [MA Human Rights Coalition](#) and brought ideas and initiatives from other communities' human rights commissions to the HRDEIC. HRDEIC members met and shared resources with human rights commissions in Rhode Island, Belmont, MA, and other MA communities.



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8. Encourage citizen attendance at panels, meetings, conferences, celebrations, or other events

- See #4, Multicultural Festival

9. Prepare reports on diversity initiatives or relationships, including on police relations, to cultivate and encourage an atmosphere of mutual understanding and harmonious intergroup relationships

- Hosted Acting Police Chief Ed Burman who provided an update on the investigation of racist graffiti directed at Schools Superintendent Dr. Omar Easy.
- Collaborated with the Police Department to ensure that people of all identities would feel safe at the Multicultural Festival.
- Issued a letter of support for Acting Police Chief Burman.

Goals for FY24:

Our goals for FY24 are to:

- Secure a budget allocation to support the HRDEIC's work
- Advocate for the Town to name a director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Launch the community reporting line
- Coordinate the second annual Community Multicultural Festival
- Coordinate a Community-SPIRIT program in collaboration with the Select Board and Department of Justice Community Relations Service
- Initiate a town equity assessment
- Continue to promote the cause of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice
- Continue to develop strategies to encourage Black, Indigenous and People of Color to participate in the HRDEIC, other Town committees and boards, and Annual Town Meeting

More details about the Committee's work can be found here: [HRDEIC web page](#).

Respectfully Submitted,
Yamini Ranjan, Chair
Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee