



## **CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS**

Kimberley Driscoll  
Mayor

### **No Place for Hate Committee Meeting Minutes July 12, 2016 at 5:30 PM 120 Washington Street, 3rd Floor**

**Members Present:** Chair Jeff Cohen, Vice-Chair/Treasurer Lucy Corchado, Conrad Prosniewski (Salem Police Liaison), Rebecca Comage (Salem State University Liaison), Rev. Joe Amico (Faith Community Liaison), Jim Bostick, Elaine Milo (City Council), Alison Miller

**Guests Present:** Tom Getz, Damian M. Schloming, Michael Millett, Kathy Lique, Patricia M. Ocasio, Gricel M. Ocasio, Scott Weisberg, Nicole Lashomb, Fawaz Abusharkh, and Shey Jaboin.

#### **Introductions and Public Comments**

Chair Jeff Cohen called the meeting to order and began introductions of members and guests.

Nicole Lashomb displayed and spoke about the centerspread of the current issue of The Rainbow Times, which is a tribute to those who died in the Orlando shooting. She explained that the centerspread will be sent as a glossy to Orlando, as a fundraiser. Jeff pointed out that this was the first year that NP4H marched; members of the committee also participated with other groups. The signs Jim Bostick designed were viewed and acclaimed.

#### **Officer Reports**

June 2016 Meeting Minutes: review and approval postponed.

**Treasurer's Report** Current Financials: several recent expenses were listed, including: a seminar that Mayor's Office Liaison Laura Assade attended; a banner @ \$38; contribution to the Pride parade @ \$75; the current balance is \$1,965.00. There are 103 T-shirts left. Rebecca Comage has the artwork for the shirts. Questions arose about possible design changes and best array of sizes to choose from when the next order is placed. Jim Bostick suggested contacting other vendors (i.e. Sarky's and Jackie's Ts in Peabody)

#### **Chair**

Jeff Cohen shared a remembrance of Elie Wiesel, sharing the quote we have chosen for NP4H ("The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference"), adding that Professor Wiesel spoke out tirelessly on how to treat other people. The Chair also welcomed Scott Weisberg to the meeting. He was an original NP4H member and served as Chair of the

committee. Jeff said that Scott, Lucy Corchado, Conrad Prosniewski and Shawn Newton all were original members of the committee when he joined.

### **Promotional Materials**

A decision was made and passed to order additional brochures soon; Laura Assade has located a translator, and the new version will be in Spanish and English. Brief discussion followed a suggestion to lawn signs and/or buttons. Jim spoke about the use of NP4H stickers as an additional way for committee visibility, and will be in contact with Jeff Cohen about design possibilities.

### **Hate Crimes Awareness Program**

Jeff acknowledged that “it’s basically been four years of hard work.” Conrad said that at this point with the project, he and Shawn are contacting the Probation Office, the judiciary, and Mary Butler’s office. Conrad reviewed the history of the program, concluding that it was far better if people were educated instead of incarcerated. Two weeks ago, the presiding judge at Salem Court contacted Shawn and Conrad following the trial of Gary Gill’s (Gigi’s) incident, which was tried as a bias crime. The man sentenced will be attending the first diversity awareness training, which will be facilitated at Shetland Park. Jeff pointed out that this is a first in the state, adding that a crime does not have to rise to the level of “hate crime” for the diversity awareness training to provide meaningful education. Conrad said that a segue into juvenile education is already underway and some details were discussed. Kathy Lique asked about an evaluation process following the trainings, and Elaine Milo asked about plans to disseminate this information and share details of the training, and how help can be provided. Conrad explained that the Probation Office will be supervising the program. Fawaz asked if other counties will be able to send offenders to the program at Shetland Park until they have their own programs in place. Grisel Ocasio asked about how the Rainbow Times could support efforts and asked about the number of participants who would attend each session (5-10 people) Discussion ensued regarding how this program can be brought to schools.

### **Update on the Jewish Journal**

Chair Jeff Cohen passed around a copy of the June 2016 issue of the Jewish Journal, calling attention to a four-panel cartoon that has sparked significant response. He then distributed copies of the current issue, calling attention to several letters written in response to the cartoon. He added that there has been lots of negative reaction in the Jewish community, and that his personal response has been to contact some of the Journal’s advertisers. He mentioned that the Journal’s publisher was removed from duty as publisher, though he was retained in another capacity. “I believe that an apology is necessary,” Jeff told the committee, and suggested that we might write a letter to the Journal, as a committee. The Human Rights Committee in Beverly scheduled a meeting as a response, and Jeff would be meeting with them. “Words matter,” he said. “What you say matters.”

**Hispanic Heritage Month.** An overview of the month’s offerings was presented including Summer Salsa, a concert series; a volunteering day to clean up Point streets, culminating at Peabody Park; a proclamation from the Mayor naming September 15 – October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month, with a formal ceremony of raising flags at Riley Plaza. Special outreach to honor Latino educators was also mentioned.

**Black Picnic** Chair Jeff Cohen and Vice-Chair Lucy Corchado spoke about the upcoming

Black Picnic, which has been a “part of Salem heritage for over 250 years.” Lucy mentioned that there will be a table registering people for early-voter registration. Jeff said that he was at the registrars’ meeting, and that early voting will entail eleven days, including evenings and weekends, noting that there will be an increased need for poll workers, especially for the early shift.

**Upcoming Events.**

- Salem Summer Meals run July 11 through August 12.
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- Salsa on the South River – series runs July 17th through August 28th.
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- The next NP4H book review will be on August 23rd. (The Other Wes Moore)
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- Conrad spoke about National Night Out and its public safety education component, pointing out that organizations will be present with literature to distribute on public safety, crime, public health – “for example, alarm systems and bike safety information.”

**Reflection** The committee discussed recent events in the news and their impact on us as individuals and on the local community. “It’s one event after another, and people just don’t know how to respond.” The committee and the guests present proceeded to discuss personal reactions and anecdotes. Rebecca Comage stated that as an educator, she focuses on developing layers of competence, envisioning “a sense of healing as we grapple with what our response will be.” The issue of vigils was discussed. Jeff asked us to think about something we can do in the committee on an ongoing basis. Also discussed were different types of communication in the city and programs that are already in place. Elaine Milo spoke about the turnout and response at “Ask a Muslim Anything” and suggested a series of discussions like this. Rev. Joe mentioned an upcoming exploration meeting on July 20, an interfaith celebration. Shey J. (guest) shared that she thinks it’s beautiful to have a place where we can speak openly. Another guest added that there is an initiative in Newburyport to get the public to address issues of diversity and intolerance, promoting “tolerance” as issues arise. Lucy Corchado responded, asking those present to think about the word “tolerance” and what it means versus what it means to be accepted, valued, and respected.