

CDICR Minutes – Town Hall, Room 2, First Floor. March 16, 2022 6:00 PM
(Commission for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations)

Attendees: Andrea Baez (chair); Walter Connelly (sec); Suzanne Martucci-Gallo; John Morgan; John Bentley

Public commenters: Tracy Honan, Lee Foley, Michael Bacon, Suzanne Leonard, Daniella Foley, Bybiose (Bee) Larochelle

Note: Town Hall mistakenly posted the meeting for 7:00 PM. And so, meeting was delayed by 15 minutes in hopes that others would appear as anticipated. Several arrived at 6:45 PM

1. Roll Call 6:15 PM

2. Support for Transgender Youth

- In response to recent legislation and government directives elsewhere (specifically Texas), a group of concerned Winthrop residents has urged Town leadership to go on record supporting the rights of LGBTQ youth. A Letter to the Editor was published in the Winthrop Transcript outlining their concerns.
- In response, Councilor-at-Large Tracey Honan drafted a resolution re-affirming Massachusetts Laws re the protection and support for LGBTQ Youth. The non-binding resolution was not permitted at the Town Council Meeting the previous night. *The resolution is attached at the bottom of these minutes.
- Concern was expressed by Commissioners Connelly and Baez that the Commission was by-passed in the drafting of said resolution, thereby questioning the very purpose of the CDICR. Nonetheless, all commissioners present noted the balanced substance and non-controversial tone of the resolution.
- The Commission voted to endorse Councilor's non-binding resolution as a reminder that Massachusetts and Winthrop by law already support the well-being of Transgender and Questioning Youth. Just like speed signs, sometimes reminders are beneficial.
- Commissioners discussed the complex health concerns specific to transgender youth. There were varied perspectives, but the commission encourages the Town and the Schools to seek out the best resources to support the health and well-being of our youth. Said resources need to be scientifically grounded, and not ideologically driven by any political agenda.
- Approximately 15 residents joined the Meeting in progress at 6:45. After a summary of Meeting, we proceeded to Public Comment.

4. Public Comment

- Several residents re-iterated their concerns for Winthrop youth around gender and sexuality issues.
- Michael Bacon reminded the group that Massachusetts already has some of the more rigorous laws protecting LGBTQ Youth.

- As a teacher in the middle school, Daniella Foley walked us through the protocols in place in attending to these concerns.
- Lee Foley encouraged the Commission to affirm Councilor Honan's resolution and to publicize its support. Lee also requested that the Commission explore a panel discussion to educate the community. Specifically, Lee had a person in mind to lead it.
- Commissioner Connelly cautioned allowing one voice to speak for the diverse LGBTQ community.
- Suzanne Leonard clarified that the panel would focus on the legal landscape as opposed to more personal perspectives.
- Bee Larochelle encouraged the Commission and residents to speak up regardless of potential pushback. Conversation doesn't start with silence.

5. Minutes from February and WPS DEI Website

- Tabled until next meeting due to lack of time (quorum would be lost as one commissioner had to leave).

6. 7:25 PM Adjourned

Submitted by Walter Connelly, Secretary of CDICR

*A NON-BINDING RESOLUTION RE-AFFIRMING THE TOWN'S ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARRASMENT POLICIES

Submitted By: Councilor At-Large Tracey Honan

Date: 10 MAR 2022

TEXT OF RESOLUTION

Whereas the Town of Winthrop is an equal opportunity employer, providing equal opportunities to all employees, without regard to sexual orientation, or gender identity¹

Whereas the Town of Winthrop promotes a workplace that is free of unlawful discrimination and harassment of any type that is based on gender identity, or sexual orientation²

Whereas the Winthrop Public School policy prohibits harassment based on sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression,³

Whereas such harassment in the workplace or school environment is unlawful and is absolutely prohibited⁴

Whereas there has been an increase in hate crimes against transgender people⁵, trans youth experience higher rates of depression, self-harm and homelessness⁷, and LGBTQ+ children and adults face abuse, harassment, and 'othering', and have higher rates of depression and suicide.^{6, 8, 9}

Be it resolved that the Winthrop Town Council advocates for public health in our community including mental health,

Be it further resolved that the Winthrop Town Council, condemns hateful discrimination in any form,

Be it further resolved that the Winthrop Town Council pledges support for Winthrop's LGBTQ+ community members, including our public-school students, parents, faculty, and staff, and

Be it further resolved that the Winthrop Town Council ensures all Winthrop residents that regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, we are one community, and we will encourage and support each other to live to our highest potential.

¹ https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/sites/g/files/vyhli4061/f/pages/equal_employment_opportunity_19.pdf

² https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/sites/g/files/vyhli4061/f/pages/anti_harassment_and_discrimination_policy_2019_winthrop.pdf

³ WPS Website (bottom of front page) - <https://www.winthrop.k12.ma.us/>

⁴ <https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment>

⁵ <https://www.advocate.com/crime/2021/9/01/fbi-report-finds-increase-hate-crimes-against-transgender-people>

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7317390/>

⁷ <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2022/latest-texas-anti-transgender-directive-explained/>

⁸ <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth/health-depression-and-suicide>

⁹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-health-and-wellness/nearly-third-gay-youths-attempted-suicide-study-finds-rcna724>