



OBSERVER REPORT

Marblehead Task Force Against Discrimination; September 20, 2021 via Zoom
LWVM Observer: Shari Pressman

Members present: Helaine Hazlett, Anne Marie Hunter, Deacon John (Joe) Whipple, Christopher Bruell, Alexis Earp, Candace Sliney, Reece Dahlberg, Chief Dennis King

Welcome and Introductions

Guests: Police Chief Dennis King was welcomed; Natalie Belli, 8th grade teacher, who started a monthly Book Club and invited students who've read a book title The Assignment to participate in tonight's book discussion: Tessa Francis, Lucas Rosen, Meredith Kennedy and Henrick Adams; Louis Meyi, representative from the Marblehead Racial Justice Team (MRJT); Leah Bokenkamp, representative from Indigenous People's committee and Celia Sliney, prospective student rep to TFAD.

Marblehead Racial Justice Team's "Hands Up for..." Initiative

Louis Meyi reported working with Leah, distributing "Hands Up for" around town this summer, distributing signage of people of color around Marblehead and working on an almost completed video.

Debrief from Farmers' Market Initiative

Helaine reported that the booth was popular at the market. She also reported that the distribution of flyers was very successful; they were also distributed to the YMCA, JCC, Devereaux School and Park and Rec camp

Updates and responses to recent incidents in Marblehead

Chief King had no new updates on recent incidents; he said he was impressed with the civic engagement in town with Social Justice at the forefront. In Salem, he had Racial Equity experience as well as racial profiling and as a graffiti expert. He noted that 5 out of 21 tagging incidents were hate incidents. King said that the ADL has been “phenomenal”. He is working on making the Marblehead Police Department more transparent and noted that his “door is always open” at the police station or through email.

Discussion of the book The Assignment by Liza Wiemer

Natalie Belli’s students had read the book and joined with TFAD members in the discussion. The book is based on a real, controversial assignment by a teacher at a school in upstate New York. Several people present suggested that the town hold an All Town Read.

Updates on Town and School Engagement

TFAD currently has two student representatives as members.

In response to a published letter, Helaine noted that TFAD currently is Diversity and Inclusion-based. The committee has no openings, but anyone interested is encouraged to apply to become a member.

Updates from Marblehead Coalition

“Marblehead Speaks Out Against Hate” will be presented on September 23 at 7 pm via Zoom. ADL will make a presentation on hate crimes and responses to them, followed by a panel discussion including Chief King, Pastor Jim Bixby, Rabbi David Meyer, Henry Turner, Marblehead resident and principal of Newton North High School, Marblehead Assistant Superintendent of Schools Nan Murphy, Helaine Hazlett and Jackie Belf-Becker.

Leah Bokencamp, on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples Day planning committee, reported that Claudia Fox Tree will speak about the invisibility of Indigenous people on Thursday evening, October 7 at 7 pm via Zoom.

On Sunday, October 10, the Nettukkusqk Singers will perform live with singing and drumming at the Jeremiah Lee Mansion at 1:00.