

Indigenous Peoples Day Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Remote via ZOOM

Draft minutes

Committee members present: Raquel Halsey, Arthur Conquest, Maya Norton, Larry Onie (on phone), Felina Silver Robinson, Kea van der Ziel; Caitlin Starr (ODICR), Raul Fernandez (Select Board Liaison), Barbara Brown (historical consultant), roll call taken of members

Members of the public: Neil Gordon

Meeting called to order at 3:05 PM

1. Discussion of Land Acknowledge (LA) statement as currently written. Some edits made. Text of statement as below was voted on and accepted unanimously with Felina, Maya, Raquel, Arthur, Larry and Kea voting yes.

As we gather today as Town Meeting Members, let us take a moment to acknowledge the history of this land we call Brookline.

This is the unceded land of the Massachusetts people, whose traditions, language and stewardship continue today through their lineal descendants, the Massachusetts Tribe of Ponkapoag. Today, we are living on land that was taken by force. By 1641, the colonists in "Brookline" had allocated to themselves almost all land that had been inhabited by Indigenous people.

Land was not the only form of theft that occurred. Lives were also stolen. Historical records state that in 1675, during King Philip's War, seven Indigenous men were sold into slavery in the Caribbean by residents of the area that we now call Brookline. The seven men represent part of the early slave trade.

Slavery in Brookline continued and grew but soon those enslaved were African or of African descent. By 1746, enslavers claimed ownership of over half of all Brookline land. We acknowledge the theft of land, culture, and lives and the ensuing enslavement of Indigenous and African peoples that occurred here. These early policies set the stage for centuries of systemic racism.

As we remember these atrocities, Town Meeting Members and the larger Town must commit ourselves to address the ongoing inequities that are the result of our history of colonialism and racism. Although we as individuals were not perpetrators of these atrocities, we benefit from these systems. Thus, we dedicate ourselves to addressing them today.

Timeline of presentations discussed as well as Human Services Subcommittee of the AC meeting of the past week and order of presentations with Raquel giving her intro and Maya reading the LA, followed by questions from the panels.

Issues raised at the Human Services subcommittee included moving the placement of the LA after the Pledge of Allegiance and before the call to order (we are not in favor of this placement), whether to place the wording of the LA in the body of the bylaw change (Sandy Gadsby, Town Moderator has ruled against this as wording may be subject to change over the years.)

2. Minutes of 2/16, 3/2, 3/23/2021 approved unanimously by Felina, Maya, Arthur, Larry and Kea, the latter needing to abstain from 3/23 minutes approval.
3. Maya gave update on a local coalition to host IPD events in the future.
4. Maya gave an update on the Upstander Project which has been shared with the School Department and teachers. We would like to know if any attended and get their impressions, etc. We hope to do more work with the schools in the future. We need to ask what we want our impact to be.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM

Next meeting Tuesday 5/11 at 3 PM, will discuss Town Meeting presentation of warrant article. Members encouraged to sign up to speak at Town Meeting.