

6/17 HRC Community Conversation on Racism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Wednesday, June 17, the City of Medford and the Medford Human Rights Commission co-sponsored a Community Conversation on Racism, with assistance from Medford Conversations. The forum was attended by more than 250 community members who participated in an open discussion about residents' lived experience with racism in Medford, and to start the conversation around strengthening communication and taking action to address racism as a public health crisis.

The Conversation included brief opening remarks by the Human Rights Commission Chair, Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn, and the City's Director of Diversity and Human Resources, before participants were randomly assigned to 13 different breakout rooms. Each room was facilitated by a Human Rights Commissioner or City staff representative who, over the course of the 45 minute discussion, worked with group participants to discuss general topics around race and racism in Medford. After 45 minutes, participants reconvened as a large group to report out on each discussion. The notes below were provided by independent note takers / volunteers within each group.

Each Breakout Room Facilitator was provided with the following guiding questions:

- What has been your lived experience regarding race and racism in Medford?
- What steps can Medford take to end racism?
- How can Medford be effective in community policing for all members of our community?
- How can the City better communicate to all persons in Medford?

Overall themes emerging from Breakout Room discussions included:

- More / better communication is needed to capture *everyone's* voices/opinions. For example, when planning meetings like this one, be more comprehensive in outreach; not everyone was aware of this meeting.
- There is a lack of diversity in the teachers/administration of the schools.
- There is a lack of diversity in the elected leadership of the City.
- Calls to defund police and reallocate funds to health, human services, and schools.
- Calls to make the City Council representative of each ward, not at large.

The notes from each Breakout Room are presented below, in outline form, based on the note takers' formats.

(Disclosure: Some of the notes below have been slightly edited solely to convert incomplete phrases or short hand notes into full sentences or to arrange bullet points into topic areas. Where notes have been rearranged there is a note in each section below. Phrases or sentences have not otherwise been rewritten or revised for context or content, and appear as provided by each group's note taker.)

Breakout Room #1

(editor's notes:

- *some phrases have been edited to make them into full sentences. The context of the phrase was not changed.*
- *"I" statements that are not in quotations are assumed to be attributed to group participants.)*

- **Question 1: How can Medford have effective policing for all members?**
 - Educate the police on people of color, their history and perspectives
 - The Medford Police Department (MPD) needs to be more transparent.
 - The Medford PD should adopted the "8 Can't Wait" policies as a starting point (<https://8cantwait.org>)
 - The leadership of the City should reflect the diversity of the City.
 - Have police less involved in some issues such as mental health and drug issues. However, there isn't funding for mental health and some of the funding needs to come from the state.
 - Example: the City of Somerville has a Trauma Response Team
 - This is a systems issue. Housing and income and policing are all related and result from systemic racism. Housing is a big issue.
 - We need an engaged community
 - We need to evaluate MPD; the Chief seems like a good person to review systems that will create change

- **Question 2: What steps should Medford take to end racism?**
 - Art within the city can either cause harm or create welcoming space.
 - Example: the Postal Office on Forest Street might not make people feel welcome. [due to its existing mural]
 - Share educational resources for White people. The library has created a list of resources. White people need to educate themselves and not make people of color do their work.
 - All of our parks honor men – seemingly White men. Can we start renaming some of them to include people of color and women?
 - All members of the Medford City Council are White. Can we have ward representation to create a more diverse city leadership?

Breakout Room #2

(editor's notes:

- *some phrases have been edited to make them into full sentences. The context of the phrase was not changed.*
- *"I" statements that are not in quotations are assumed to be attributed to group participants.)*

- **General Breakout Room themes:**

- People want data:
 - Access to information about the Medford Police, what are they doing to implement 21st Century Policing, what have they done about 8 Can't Wait?
 - The online community is toxic:
 - people are "othered:" "you are not one of us," whether you are a person of color or a new resident who is White.
 - Racism is not only covert, it is overt.
 - Our children do not see anyone in the Medford Schools who look like them.
 - The City is not safe if you are new or different; there are no safe spaces.
 - Need to make "welcome" more real, visible. How do you prove to people who do not see it as safe that you can be trusted, that they will be heard and responded to?
 - Lean into safe spaces like the playground or West Medford Community Center, or Faith communities
 - Structures are not welcoming, such as communication, schools, etc.
 - One member of this Breakout Room is a 60 year old Italian American, lifelong Medford resident, was really touched by hearing the stories of others, and looks for ways to build relationships and get to know each other. Expressed a hope to turn these 200 people/attendees into 2,000 people by the fall and 20,000 people by next year.
 - How information is shared is a huge problem:
 - stop token-ism
 - get all of the city involved (center BIPOC voices) on the planning process and engage/invite BIPOC (through their networks) before you plan an event.
 - In order to create safety, you need to build trust and confidence that all will be heard, by demonstrating that you hear and take action. Listen when people complain. When someone says they are hurting, hear that they are hurting, and do something about that.
 - Black-led groups were not even invited to this event. We had to find it by chance.
 - Housing Policy will affect our capacity to recruit BIPOC leaders/teachers/neighbors.
 - The chat function being unavailable in the opening of the meeting was another way that people felt silenced; Mobilize Medford would have dropped information in the chat about their group (they were not invited to the event).
 - Lack of people of color in the leadership of the city, this meeting, the Hormel Stadium event, other gatherings.
 - These cannot be led by White people, even if the Mayor is White. None of these things affect a sense of trust.
 - Develop safety that would get BIPOC to show up for conversations about racism.
- **Question 1: What has been your lived experience regarding race and racism living in Medford?**

- My experiences around racism are that I haven't experienced it, it is something I am walking towards rather than running from.
- I Love Wright's Pond but notice there are not a lot of people of color there. Also, the high cost of buying a pass to go there every summer it is a systemic issue. We have a public park and beautiful beach; the group had the idea of having passes free for a certain income level and would love to see it opened up to everyone.
- Had an issue with the way this [*the conversation/overall meeting*] was built.
 - The chat room was silent. No one can drop links to their organization, no one can talk about the issues in this community.
 - Lack of people of color at this meeting and meetings in general.
 - Also problematic about how people have been informed with these meetings. Mayor was at the first meeting, talked and then nothing was done.
 - Discussion about the idea that people have to do something to get people to move their feet. People like that should not be in charge of any conversation about race because they are part of the problem.
- Specific example offered: in Medford High School, when you are outspoken as a young Black man:
 - a Black student was taking antidepressants and medicine for narcolepsy. The teacher saw that the student was falling asleep in class. The student got punished for falling asleep in alternative learning program where they should know better. White kids with similar behavior were not punished for such.
- As a Filipino resident, I find the old school nature of Medford to be "othering."
 - The "you haven't lived here long enough" feels like being singled out as not White enough.
 - Some of the online forums are very toxic environments.
 - It was not easy to find this event.
 - Not welcoming to newcomers in general.
 - I quit commenting most the time because I got yelled down in the Medford MA Politics group by two very aggressive commenters that tend to control conversations. The "conversation" was about improving voter access. I was shouted down for pointing out how certain ID policies can be discriminating.
- I do think that one of our issues in the Medford schools is that the kids never see someone who looks like them. My daughter was in 11th grade before she had a substitute teacher that was Black. Not only teachers but administrators.
- Community forums are incredibly unwelcoming to people of color. If I only knew Medford through those communities would not want to be a part of them.
- Searching for information about the police and cannot find it.
- Need for communication in this City.
 - Mayor's office did not even create a Facebook group or event for this. How did the City do outreach to get people of color into this gathering?
 - What about the Digital Divide? Those who do not have access to Zoom, or are working multiple jobs, on the front lines working, and cannot make these gatherings.

- **Question 2: What steps would you recommend that Medford might take to become anti-racist?**
 - Recognize that this is the beginning. There is overt racism and there is the fact that our structures are not reflective. There are no people of color in elected positions.
 - How do we move forward? Start small.
 - At a recent school committee meeting, [attendees] talked about the fact that they have been talking about this for a long time and have not been heard. Followed by another woman who said that people are not being open to people's hurt.
 - Strong sense of "othering" in this community. Antagonistic [tone] in meetings and spaces.
 - Discussion about who is involved in the conversation and the idea of inviting people Black people
 - Trying to learn about the community and whether it is a safe space to raise kids.
 - Safe space is a big problem. [I have] only been involved with the City because of having children. I grew up in Cincinnati and when I got here, it was very clear that I was not cool with the residents that were around me. If I felt unwelcome just because I was from a different state, then the City is not doing a good job or reaching out to people. Because the City isn't safe, people are not going to come out to communicate. Part of this is being forced to be visible as you join a conversation. Afraid to put a Black Lives Matter sign on our lawn because of the cop down the street. This place is not friendly. We have to have the outreach go to places that are safe spaces. The best people we met were through the schools and it was on the playgrounds we found out it was happening.
 - Consistent themes: about safety and trust. We can communicate all we want, but if people do not feel safe in a space, why would I come.
 - Grateful to how people have shared passion and pain. This hate is not what Medford is supposed to be about. This is a stepping stone for all of us. We all try to keep our neighborhoods safe and comfortable for our children and children's children. The future of Medford is in our hands. It's all about a peaceful process that gives everyone space. I am understanding and trying to understand. I do think this is an extremely positive step forward. It has to get better. All in.
 - It seems like a major takeaway is that Medford needs to address how information is shared. It seems like it reinforces that White people are in the know of local events, politics etc., giving them more power.
 - [I] had a lot of trouble in Medford in the beginning in trying to make friends. Made my way through it, but it is not easy. I think that communication is key. People didn't even know about this meeting. Idea: send a robo call for things like this that are so important for people to know about meetings and gatherings.
 - It is very hard to get involved in Medford and feels very unwelcoming, except for [my] individual neighborhood which was very welcoming. Communication needs to be increased.
 - I also support the importance of information being accessible. I barely found out about this and then had a hard time finding it again. Also, what about those without internet access? How can they participate in this communication?

- [We are] having lots of conversations and trying to listen to people in Medford. Trying to work on significant changes. There is a lot of work to do in Medford and I am very cognizant of how I get information out when the digital divide is even more acute.
 - Our group was not invited to this. We had to find it. We want to talk about changing racism but we have a poster of slaves in the post office. You have to earn the trust of people of color. There is a history of this going against people. We've been talking for a long time but we need action. Action gets results.
 - To be anti-racist we need to do it around housing policy. We need more affordable and multi-unit housing.
 - White people need to make sacrifices to have the input, representation and the voices of BIPOC, etc.
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Breakout Room #3

To come

Breakout Room #4

- **Question 1: What is Community Policing?**
 - See the police as a member of the community. The policewomen and men should be a part of the community. For example, playing hoops with community children.
 - One of the Medford Public Schools administrators mentioned a positive program - the partnership between the Schools and the Medford Police Department. The police came into the school to read books and have lunch with the students. Building relationships with the students at a young age is very important to build trust. Continuation with this program is beneficial.
 - Get to know who your police officers are, neighborhood meetings.
 - The police used to ride their bikes in the neighborhood. It's friendlier this way. Can we see some of this over the summer and fall?
 - Has there been a response to the Mobilize Medford's demands?
 - People are hesitant because some people aren't seeing the problem. Build trust with the black and brown communities involved.
 - How do we reassure the community members that the police are trustworthy?
 - Rm 4 would appreciate a statement from the police to say they represent the Medford community.
- **Question 2: What steps can Medford take to end racism?**
 - Address the education system. A group of graduates from Medford High submitted a list of suggestions.
 - We must re-educate ourselves and our students. The updated curriculum in the schools have supports for our students. Go back to the education system. Teach everyone how to view things around them to see where they have their own

- unconscious bias and work towards being more inclusive, and where are they wrong. Educate the teachers, adults and the children
 - Over the past few weeks, the community has expressed their voices to the Mayor, the City Council.
 - 3 Links were shared:
 - **The open letter written to the Chief of Police:**
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vsrZm9wQNbk5E6B4bnwYPxF1HOkUYvUI6Q9jreY8bGA/edit?usp=sharing> k to Open Letter to the Chief of Police
 - **The open letter regarding schools written by Mobilize Medford**
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HSKyjgpli-xugjoR6zy8B9ZP0kgV08V01OCHQ8Bc-XA/edit?usp=sharing>
 - **A petition you can sign if you'd like to support them**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScd7tHuWRRiyztSds6JQbtvvuJyQUJN3Dk_goBwCQB4gKUpBg/viewform)
 - **Question 3: lived experiences.**
 - We don't have the same experience as African Americans and Haitians or other citizens. People can feel discriminated against by other children.
 - In the Medford Transcript most of the photos are pictures of mostly White community members.
 - Going on a walk, do you feel safe in all neighborhoods?
 - One community member spoke up and mentioned she is Black and she hasn't heard anything from Mobilize Medford.
 - The group in Room 4 specifically asked if there is a response to the open letters from Mobilize Medford. They would like to hear something, as simple as response noting they are working on a response to the letter.
 - **Question 4: communication**
 - Get a line item for translation services in Medford. Include it in the City services, Currently, it's all-volunteer effort.
 - Take action.
 - Is there a way to elicit more feedback from the community? Can people text their concerns anonymously if they are uncomfortable with Zoom or they don't want their name shared?
 - Do the MPD have antibias and de-escalation training for the police? Can this information be shared with the community?
 - Point of information: the largest immigrant group is Haitian.
 - Point of information: the mural in the post office is offensive to some community members.
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Breakout Room #5

- **Questions offered by facilitator:**

- **What's an effective community policing strategy that will change the way we do things?**
- **What are your lived experiences?**
- Folks said they were here for a number of reasons
 - many have kids in the schools and want to address racism there
 - many are excited that people care about this issue at the moment and think it's the right time to fix problems we have had for a long time
 - some cited that Medford is "more" racist than surrounding communities
- We need more police officers, teachers, staff in city hall, and art that reflects our population. (It's all White men and ships on our walls.)
 - Bring in more art that is welcoming and reflects different cultures.
 - Do more outreach, bring people into our city life.
- Need better outreach to the Black community, immigrant community. The people in this room are not marginalized, for example. They are being left out of civic life
- Education/curriculum
 - We need to teach people about the history of Black Americans. Our history is whitewashed.
- Personal experience
 - I'm mixed. Growing up I had no Black friends, no Black teachers. One Black teacher but there were rumors she got fired, not sure what happened to her. Hated being a POC growing up. It was uncomfortable. My dad got pulled over for no reason. It was hurtful.
 - Have seen injustices in public schools. Just graduated from Medford High School. As an Arab Muslim I grew up with a lot of diverse friends - White, Latino, etc. and we shared a lot of the same experiences coming from immigrant families. There was a lack of diversity in schools. Majority of teachers at the Roberts School were White, the same at MHS. It automatically makes students uncomfortable to have all White teachers. We have to make it attractive for POC, people of different ethnicities and backgrounds, to move to Medford. If we can improve the way we represent ourselves as a community and as a school, and as a district, we have to have more events that represent that diversity - activities that make people feel like they're at home, like this is a place where everyone can come and live. I love the City with all of my heart but there's a lot that needs to be done from the way we treat POC, immigrant kids, how we handle budgets by not giving enough money to other problems other than the police. Have lots of conversations and discussions with family members and people around you about racism; they are hard conversations but we have to have them. It takes a village / a whole community to raise a child and we all have to reflect and ask what we want for our children. The only way you can do that is by having those conversations. And then it becomes easier, little by little. I experienced racism in preschool because my mother wore a hijab, right around 9/11. I was ashamed of being an Arab, at one point of being a Muslim, because I was afraid that if I don't fit in people are going to bully me or turn their backs for me. Though I am White passing, I feel with people of color, with Arab people, with kids who were born

- here but have immigrant parents. Often you remember not exactly what happened but how it made you feel. People have felt anger and restlessness - a lot of people I know are staying silent about it because they are white passing and think that they don't have to deal with it. It's none of their "business" - they're safe.
- I have been followed in stores. People ask me "where I'm from." I got stopped for a light being out, but it was working. At the time I didn't realize how unsafe it could be to get out of the car and walk around
 - Interested in putting more money into social services; instead of looking at what we can do for community policing, just looking at totally different projects.
 - Better fund community services.
 - Looking at police logs, majority of crime is house calls, wellness checks, traffic checks - probably better served by other groups
 - There have been disturbing things. The way officer Steven Laburke was not disciplined makes me wonder about accountability. We need a civilian review board - an accountability measure - collecting and reporting data publicly about misconduct. Have a no tolerance policy if an officer witnesses misconduct.
 - Medford supports NEMLEC – a private organization that prevents transparency that militarizes the north shore; that's completely inappropriate.
 - Look at how much money we're giving to the police and if it could be better utilized for community outreach organizations such as social workers, etc.
 - 25% of our police force is on the Brady list. That means they aren't considered reliable witnesses because of their participation in the overtime scandal. How can we trust them to police our communities if they aren't considered reliable? I want to see officers held accountable for their actions.
 - We should stay in contact, continue to work on collective action. It was amazing that the young people spoke up with their lived experiences.
 - A student in the school was worried that they were going to be arrested because a cop was there. The response was to add more cops to the school. That doesn't make the kid feel more comfortable - we sometimes forget what it's like to be a child.
 - There was a Memorial Day concert that was too nationalistic rather than patriotic.
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Breakout Room #6

- As a theme, most of the people in the breakout room were actually there to listen, and that was somewhat thwarted by the fact that most of the people in our group were white.
- An early comment that was echoed repeatedly was that people would like to see the Medford Police Department defunded and to see those funds diverted into social services, affordable housing, addressing food insecurity, mental health and addiction counseling, etc.
- The conversation surrounding policing progressed with people expressing that they would like to see policing in Medford transform into something better.
- People have noticed that Medford's City Council and School Committee are *not* representative of the city's diverse population.

- We did discuss the idea of a Charter Review so that we could have ward representation.
 - The lack of diversity among Medford schools' teaching staff was mentioned repeatedly.
 - Tied to that, there was mention of the Twitter thread written by a Medford High School graduate outlining racist experiences he had while at the school. The Breakout Room discussed concern that there is a great deal of unacknowledged and unaddressed racism--both structural and overt--in Medford schools.
 - Everyone in the breakout room wanted to see the voices and experiences of Black people, Indigenous people and People of Color centered in the larger Medford conversation about racism.
 - More than once, people said explicitly that they want to see "more people at the table" when it comes to decisions and policymaking.
 - We had a couple of public health professionals in our group who mentioned concerns over health disparities that exist along race and socioeconomic lines, and concern about socioeconomic disparities within Medford period.
 - A teacher in a Medford middle school said that there are "two different Medfords" and they don't interact or overlap.
 - A call was made for some serious "institutional introspection" in Medford.
 - The group expressed wanting more transparency and communication from the City of Medford, and more community conversation.
 - One person did mention that they would also like to see re-districting at the State level because with West Medford lumped in with Arlington, it is highly unlikely that someone from West Medford will ever hold that state-level seat.
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Breakout Room #7

- What has been your lived experience with racism in Medford?
 - We had at least four very personal stories of racist incidents in Medford.
 - We acknowledged of how hurtful these incidents are and how they erode trust.
 - Someone noted the vigil at Hormel Stadium had the most Black people that they'd ever seen gathered in Medford - was good to see.
 - Participant: "A couple other things I've witnessed at the Columbus elementary school is how challenged the PTO was at getting parents of color to meetings. We need to find out how to make these meetings more accessible."
 - "The other thing was the school trip to NYC at the Andrews School. It's not affordable for everyone and there is not much done to make it accessible for those who want to go but can't. I spoke to the principal of the McGlynn School about it and he said it's such a deep Medford tradition and people feel really strongly about it."
 - "Virtual meetings are helpful to expand accessibility. If there can be a hybrid of in-person and virtual moving forward that could be helpful."
 - "Not everyone at the high school can afford the bus pass."

- “Thank you, [name omitted for anonymity]. It is ok to sit with how hard this is. (that was meant for us all)”
 - Very early on someone brought up how racially segregated Medford was and how segregated the neighborhoods are, both economically and geographically.
 - Two participants were members of Mobilize Medford and were young people. All appreciated their voices in the conversation.
 - One participant who moved here from New York noted the “old school” mindset which is the dominant culture in Medford and can be jarring if you’re coming from a more progressive place.
 - How can we make meetings more accessible to persons of color? How can we better communicate?
 - Zoom calls are much easier to participate. Have every public meeting this way?
 - Accessibility issue: high school students can buy MBTA passes but they’re too expensive and some can’t afford it. North Medford has its own school bus. South Medford residents can’t get to school on time, face more detentions and suspensions for being late.
 - In schools, art/wall displays, curriculum are not representative.
 - Need more diversity among teachers.
 - Curriculum around slavery, etc. is confusing, accusatory, harsh especially for middle and elementary school children.
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Breakout Room #8

- **Personal stories/observations about race and racism in Medford**
 - Medford is segregated. One West Medford resident said they felt like there was a “lie down High Street.”
 - Another West Medford resident observed that the area was much more diverse when they were growing up (age was not given). Concern about gentrification, lack of diversity.
- **Personal stories about Medford police and policing**
 - One person shared that they were present at the Halloween event a few years ago where several Medford police officers showed up dressed as Hilary Clinton in handcuffs.
 - One participant shared that four police officers came to the apartment of their neighbor, a senior citizen, on a wellness visit. One of the officers banged on the door and yelled, which the participant felt probably frightened the neighbor. When the neighbor didn’t answer, the police broke down her door. The participant felt it was unnecessarily frightening and an unnecessary use of force and wondered why the police were on a wellness visit in the first place.
- **Policing-related questions, concerns, and suggestions**

- Several people expressed curiosity and concern about the budget and overtime in the police budget, deficit in schools.
- A general consensus was a desire for more transparency and information about policing, especially budgets and training. “We need to know what the police are being trained in.”
 - To underscore, there was a general consensus that police should be trained in de-escalation strategies.
- People were supportive of the idea of reducing the police budget in order to distribute funds to schools and social services, and to stop having police perform so many duties that should be under social or health services.
- People also thought police should be properly trained in how to approach and deal with persons with mental illness, to de-escalate situations involving people with mental illness.
- Training needs to be ongoing, sustained, and sustainable. Training must be evaluated and must be part of the job, accepted by the union. Can’t just be a box that we check.

- **Schools and education**

- There was a deep concern expressed about having more representation in education. People expressed that there are not enough Black educators and educators of color in the schools, and the Black and POC educators who have been hired in the past could not be retained. There was a strong sense that we should not only recruit and hire but also retain black and POC educators. Retention involves changing the environment in the schools, among other things (such as affordable housing). There needs to be *support* for Black educators so that they have reasons to remain in the local schools.
- Strong opinions that there should be more Black history taught in the schools, and more fact-checking about what is taught in textbooks and by white instructors. Examples included being taught in school that the Civil War was about states rights (untrue), or never being taught about Juneteenth or Medford’s history in the slave trade (omissions).
- Underscored that the curriculum should be diverse and culturally relevant. More Black and POC history and literature.
- Participants noted that they were aware of stories from Black and POC students in Medford describing incidents of racism they had experienced.
- Instructors in the schools should have anti-bias training, and there should be evaluations of how well they were teaching the diverse curriculum.

- **Training for educators, students, police, and public officials**
 - Training needs to be ongoing, sustained, and sustainable. Training must be evaluated and must be part of the job, accepted by the union. Can't just be a box that is checked.
 - There was also support for bystander intervention training to be taught in schools and other areas, similar to what is provided in universities for sexual assault. (For example, <https://cultureofrespect.org/program/green-dot-etc/>) There was an idea to provide bystander intervention training so that people could intervene when they see/hear racist words/actions

 - **Housing**
 - There was a strong feeling that there is not a lot of affordable housing, that people could not afford to move into Medford. People in the group also expressed that negative past actions around zoning and redlining are related to other issues that had come up, including segregation, lack of representation in schools and government, and gentrification. Desire for affordable housing, loan programs, and rent control to enable less economically advantaged groups to live here (who are disproportionately non-white).

 - **Government (and communication)**
 - As with schools, there was a general frustration that the city government is not racially diverse or representative of the community.
 - Concern that government spaces are not welcoming to Black or POC residents
 - Maybe the city website could include more "basic civics" information, such as how to run for an elected office.
 - Elected officials should have listservs, the city could use social media more and update the website/include more information.
 - (Note from facilitator: I was under the impression that I had already signed up for city email because I receive alerts about certain things, such as police meetings and water being turned off, etc. But I don't receive other mail, such as the information about this meeting, which I heard about from someone who saw it on twitter. Why would I receive some email and not others? Is there a difference between receiving alerts and receiving other news? If so, there shouldn't be IMO)
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Breakout Room #9

- Summary

- Introductions: a mix of people with various years of living or working in Medford.
 - Had people who are currently in school or have children in school; talked about how parts of Medford look very different. A youth talked about challenges exploring her ethnicities and how people don't understand that.
 - Participants noted that people in power in Medford are all White and the systems seem to reinforce that the positions stay in the hands of White people.
 - Focus on the importance of shifting the police; need to build trust with community
 - Transparency: Releasing more information about stops, body cameras. Civilian board to review videos and see what interactions look like.
 - Recognition that stories of past negative experiences can still happen today
 - Chief Buckley invited personal conversations to share all of the ideas and make change.
- Notes
 - Chief Buckley: Joined PD in 1998 when he was in his 30's. Attended Somerville/Medford, catholic school. As a police officer he was asked to go to houses and help people, and the people did not look like him, did not have the same shared experiences. He was struck by how different the white police force was from families of immigrants and people of color. His work has been affected by making the connection to issues of race in policing and that is his priority.
 - Participant experience: Participant has lived in both west Medford and High St., each very different racially. Trying to figure out both ethnicities, African American and Irish. Would help to have more POC in police, school, city council. People in power.
 - Participant experience: knows someone who grew up in Medford in 1950s and 1960s. vandalized cars and blamed it on black kids and the police accepted it. The person who told the story told it with pride, that he was able to blame his vandalism on black people and that the police accepted it.
 - Participant experience: Lived in Medford for 40 years. Always saw police pull over Black drivers.
 - Haines Sq. police did an anti-Hilary skit on election day 2016. Saw that as hostile and aggressive.
 - Participant experience: walk around with White privilege. Need to acknowledge that the problem is not past, but present. Worked as an investigator of police misconduct. Worried about so many protections for the police. Rage about what is happening.
 - Participant experience: policing is local and national. Our perception of police locally is covered by issues nationally. We have to weed out bad actors and build trust
 - Participant experience: transparency is key. Releasing more information about stops, body cameras. Civilian board to review videos and see what interactions look like.
 - Participant experience: most Medford leadership looks White. Challenge with how to get that to change.

Breakout Room #10

Question 1: What gives you hope?

- The turnout for the conversations here and actually talking about racism and anti-racism
- Not just about Medford, and people are talking to each other
- Worked with gender equity for a long time and hopeful will see progress through interventions and dialogue
- The Hormel gathering; one of the organizers was a 2011 graduate so encouraged by younger people wanting to progress
- People willing to participate no matter what; joining and acting as they can
- More actions and conversations going on for longer periods of time
- The march was encouraging
- Hopeful for a different world for grandchildren

Question 2: How can Medford be effective in policing for all members of the community?

- Community development of shared vision/goals/expectations to guide police department
- Civilian/community oversight who represent the population of the city to oversee employees (police)
- Disarming to avoid unequal force
- Provide and share more stats and concrete data for oversight--curious to know what Medford is doing; data helpful in advocating for needed areas and determine how budget is used
- Has had a perspective of police as a system of violence--perhaps have police focus on listening to people and helping, becoming more aware of situations and avoid becoming more confrontational and focus more on the humanity rather than rules
- Review budgets and where it is used and opening up conversations and attending the scheduled police monthly meetings
- Last year, the police budget increased by 25% while city and schools were significantly less
- Echoing points of budget and how it reflects the priority of the community--perhaps should go more to healthcare and proactive organizations and sensitivity training

Question 3: What has been your lived experience regarding race and racism in Medford?

- Both implicit and overt bias, both on the street and in schools
 - Thought being non-racist was enough but now feel more education and awareness necessary (more anti-racist)
 - Changed last name because I felt I was being discriminated against in job opportunities. Still shocked by occasional racist comments by people I know when they speak of others to me; and in speaking with a colleague about how to respond, his suggestion was to ask, "What do you mean?"
 - I have a child on the spectrum and have concerns about necessary sensitivity training for police. Shocked by racist neighbors and they are not of a different generation--it is pathological and hurtful.
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Breakout Room #11

- **Question 1: How can Medford be effective in community policing for all members of our community?**
 - Listen to what is going on around us.
 - Community members should no longer stay silent and let racism slide when they hear it from others, or see it happening.
 - Idea of taking some of the load off of officers, having for instance not only having officers present when taking reports of trauma or assaults also having social workers and professionals to deal with the issues.
 - Police presence is not positively felt, officers often are confined to their vehicles and are not truly within the community.
 - Playing basketball with the officers, have events like ice cream socials between officers and community members.
 - Build trust and transparency between officers and community members.

 - **Question 2: What steps can Medford take to end racism?**
 - Being aware of the existence of racism and inequalities in Medford is the first step to take on racism.
 - More representation on the city council and in positions of power
 - Change biases, modify education to acknowledge racism is still happening.
 - Start with education, learning of people's stories, and Black history more deeply and constantly.
 - Black history month should not be confined to solely that, and not stay fixed on the same ideas and messages every year. Oftentimes, we are only looking at the past and not thinking about what we should do now. How we should carry on the torch of movements like the Civil Rights movement.

 - **Question 3: How can the City better communicate to all persons in Medford?**
 - We need to listen
 - We need to talk more about it
 - Everyone should feel welcomed, and safe living in the city.
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Breakout Room #12

- **General Sentiments:**
 - Want racist-free city
 - Excited to see movement in Medford
 - Terrible ache to see racism in city and school
 - Renewed hope for Medford, happy tears
 - Supportive of HRC work
 - Medford resident chose location to reside because of its diversity

- Not paying enough attention to my town, so trying to do that now
 - Privileged no negative and minimal interactions with police so hard to say what would make it better
 - Want to know more information about this issue but unclear where to look; not enough notice of these events
- **Ideas and general notes:**
 - Want to see mayor sign pledge about police reform
 - We want all police complaints made public
 - Look toward a list of commitments that are asked by BLM and Mobilize Medford
 - Publicize salaries
 - Take the lead from BIPOC priorities for policing
 - HRC Subcommittees formed: currently working to review MPD policies and offer feedback to the Chief as well as a subgroup exploring how to form more diverse and inclusive committees and commissions
 - Community policing vision: NO VISIBILITY/PUBLIC INTERACTION need to see police officers walking the streets and getting to know the community in normal settings and not just tense situations/regular duties (can they attend these discussions?) ; bring police into school for positive interactions
 - IDEAS – anti racism training in schools – used in Arlington (<https://edcollab.org/professional-learning/ideas/>)
 - Restorative justice and community work with youth at risk of ending up in the criminal justice system
 - City notices and publications are minimally translated; we need things in other major languages
 - Use Tufts as a resource of expertise, resources, training; have them contribute to the community
 - We cannot move forward until we look at our history in Medford, including slavery, abolitionists and stop on underground railroad...
 - **Concerns:**
 - Past & present stories of racism in Medford: one member had a friend murdered because of race in Medford (on street, 1970s), 2 boys were set on fire, Brian Nelson was murdered for being black in Medford, race issues at high school today & in the past
 - Medford made an announcement about Wright's Pond: it's only in English, the fees are expensive, there is online access only – this process benefits the status quo. Over time efforts have been made to make Wright's Pond only accessible to some people. Intentionally difficult and expensive to access.
 - Change Columbus school name - break along newcomer & old timer lines
 - Medford Vision Committee: Medford government is all White; the committee needs to be diverse in order to represent the diversity of Medford
 - Tension between people born and raised here and people who move here. We need to grapple with these two groups. Race is part of this issue, but also economic?
 - *State level concern*– banning choke holds; reducing unlimited protections for police officers; more transparency for how incidents are handled; holding police officers accountable

- **Questions for Chief and Mayor:**

- How many people of color/percentage are on the police force? women? minorities?
- Do we have community policing in Medford?
- How do we deal with those MPD with mental health (trauma PTSD) issues?
- What is the status of all Medford police officers wearing body cameras?
- How many people go to the police community meetings?
- What is the police's current relationship with POC and how do we know? outreach efforts of positive interactions?
- What are Medford's police policies and how can they be viewed by the public?
- How will progress with all new mentioned actions made by the city and MPD be assessed?
- How will everyone provide feedback that is valued?
- Does the MPD and all city personnel/depts have regular and ongoing anti-bias, anti-racism training in place for all officers?
- How do we approach our racist city history to look forward and make change in our community?

Breakout Room #13 notes

To come