

## SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

### Hate Crimes Task Force

#### Minutes

The Suffolk County Hate Crimes Task Force Meeting was held at the William H. Rogers Legislative Building in Smithtown, New York, on Tuesday, July 21, 2009 at 3:00 P.M.

#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. DuWayne Gregory, Chairman  
Laura A. Ahearn  
Reynolds E. Hawkins  
Dr. David Scott Kilmnick  
Chief Inspector Ty Mojica  
Rabbi Steven Moss  
Renee Ortiz  
Reverend Roderick Pearson  
Det. Sergeant Robert Reecks

#### MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Reverend Joan Barrett  
Candido Crespo  
Mohsen Elsayed

#### ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Maxvel Rose, Aide to Legislator Gregory  
Arley Pelaez, BiasHELP  
Dr. April Winningham, BiasHELP  
Colleen Ansanelli, Suffolk County Police Department  
Irina Richardson, Freelance Writer, Long Island Wins  
Michael O'Neill, East Hampton Anti-Bias Task Force  
Abraham Valentin, National Association of Social Workers  
Luis Valenzuela, LI Immigrant Alliance

#### MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Gabrielle Skolom, Court Stenographer.

#### MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Gabrielle Skolom & Diana Kraus - Court Stenographers

*[The meeting was called to order at 3:00 P.M.]*

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Good afternoon. We're going to go ahead and get started with the Hate Crimes Task Force. We will start with the Pledge Of Allegiance led by Reynolds Hawkins.

SALUTATION

Okay. Thank you. Good afternoon. This is our second meeting of the Hate Crimes Task Force. We have two members that will not be here today; that's Reverend Joan Barrett as well as Mohsen Elsayed. We have two other members that should be coming. They will join us when they get here.

On the agenda from our last meeting, we had spoken briefly about the public hearings, and I asked everyone to give some thought about locations and how, you know, some issues regarding the public hearings as well as possible organizations that we can ask to come before us and speak. Has anyone given any thought about possible locations?

**REV. PEARSON:**

Definitely Brentwood Library.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Brentwood Library? Okay. Anyone else have any suggestions? Don't all speak at once.

**[LAUGHTER]**

Let me just throw this out. Renee Ortiz and myself, we've taken the liberty to talk to the Touro Law Center. They are willing to host us. Our Lady of Miraculous Medal in Wyandanch, Father Bill Brisotti, he's willing to host a public hearing there as well. I also gave a call to the Brookhaven Town today; they're -- you know, they're going to get back to us. Of course, they need more information from us. They're located in Farmingville; as well as the Riverhead Culinary Arts Center. I felt that's important, and, as we discussed, we have some outreach into the East End. Does anyone -- and there was also a suggestion made that possibly the Brentwood Campus of the Community College, so we have some possible locations. Anyone else? Is there anything we're missing?

**DR. KILMNICK:**

Well, I offered the Long Island Gay and Lesbian Community Center as well.

**MS. AHEARN:**

So you had suggested Wyandanch, Riverhead, Central Islip? Where is the --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right. Touro is located in Central Islip.

**MS. AHEARN:**

And in Riverhead?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

The Riverhead Culinary Arts Center.

**MS. AHEARN:**

What other town was it? CI, Riverhead Culinary Arts, Wyandanch --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Brookhaven.

**RABBI MOSS:**

I would just like to suggest that I know that Riverhead, you know, being in the center of the two forks, obviously, is an attractive idea. And when the Human Rights Commission has held its East End meetings, that's where we've chosen especially because the County Center is close by, or last May, we held it at the Cornell Extension Center. They opened up; they allowed us to use their facilities, which are very nice. And one year, we also did the Riverhead Library, which is a very nice location, too. They have good meeting rooms. And I don't know exactly how many meetings we're planning on holding, but rather than just lumping together the entire East End in one location -- of course this means a, you know, a major movement driving-wise, but the East End comes here, so we should go there to Greenport. I would certainly -- I know the Southold Anti-Bias Task Force has become very, very active. A lot of things are going on up there that should concern us. And then on the South Fork, somewhere in the Hamptons.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**RABBI MOSS:**

So depending upon on how many meetings we want to have, that's three locations on the East End which, you know, really should -- deserves our attention.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay. Thank you. The Legislation for the Task Force calls for four public hearings. So we wanted to get a location that's going to get be accessible to everyone, where everyone can -- you know, in a concentrated area, if you will, if I could use that term, where people that may have an interest in this issue or this Task Force can get to it. So I thought Riverhead, possibly; you know, we've used it for Legislative meetings but if there are any other locations, certainly, please, suggest that.

**MS. AHEARN:**

The only other addition I would suggest is in Patchogue, maybe at South Ocean Avenue Middle School.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**DR. KILMNICK:**

I just think it's going to be real important not to just have a location such as Brentwood, Central Islip but to really reach out to the people who are working with these folks day in and out so we're not just saying, "We're having a meeting in this particular town," and then no one shows up. We really need to get people there who we need to hear from.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right, and that's the other aspect that we need to talk about is publicizing the meetings and how we're going to do that -- you know, going through the churches, the civic groups, community leaders, that network; and that's going to be a very important issue. We're going to have a notice to publicize the meeting, but beyond that, we need to make some efforts and ensure that the communities that we're targeting are coming out to take participate.

**REV. PEARSON:**

I just wanted to add, to go back to the locations for a minute, and to --  
I mean, I heard a lot of different locations. To make sure that these locations are locations where the community at large is going to come to a meeting -- so some of the locations that I heard in our list of just now may not be -- they may be great locations for events, but may not be great locations for the public, and that's -- I think we really want to make sure that we reach out to the public. And to add to Rabbi Moss' statement that a location somewhere in Riverhead which would bring those

communities together, you know, out on the East End, because if we're only going to do four, we've got to make sure that they're central enough locations so that we get the community and not just those of us and those leaders who show up, but we really want the people in the communities to show up.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**RABBI MOSS:**

I would like to reiterate what Reverend Pearson said before. I think the Brentwood Library -- either Brentwood or Wyandanch are really key locations. I think we've got to choose one in the Islip/Babylon-type area. I think one of those two are very important. And then I think Brookhaven because of what it means, so that takes care of two of them. And within Riverhead, the County Center is not conveniently located. So I would suggest, like I mentioned before, the Riverhead Library is right there in the middle of town, so people can even possibly walk there or depending on what time of the day it's being held, bicycle ride there, if they have to for those who don't have -- you know, don't have their own transportation.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I have never been there. Is it large enough to accommodate us?

**RABBI MOSS:**

I mean the library definitely is. As well as, as I mentioned, we did the Cornell Extension Center which is also right there in the middle of it, and they have a very large meeting room upstairs.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

That's good.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay. Because the one factor is that we have to consider is that we don't know what the turnout's going to be. We can have 10 people or we can have 100 people, so I want to make sure that we have enough room to accommodate, you know, what -- the people that are going to come.

**RABBI MOSS:**

I have a feeling we are going to be overflowing with people. I have that feeling.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**MS. AHEARN:**

Does Brookhaven Town Hall -- is this working?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**MS. AHEARN:**

Does the Brookhaven Town Hall have public transportation? Because I know in some of the areas -- like for example, I mention Patchogue, there's a train station right across the street from the middle school.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right, right. But the Town Hall is -- it's kind of, you know, located off the beaten path, if you will. I would imagine it probably does have public transportation, but it's not visible as probably, I guess, the middle school or whatever.

One concern that I had was I didn't want to focus -- I knew that we should have a location in Brookhaven. I didn't want to necessarily focus in Patchogue because, like I said, Farmingville has been an area that's been an issue. It's probably the beginning of the issue for as far as, you know, the undocumented workers and the sort -- and the problems that evolve from that situation; that's still ongoing. So I thought that maybe the Brookhaven Town Hall would be a good location. There aren't too many that I'm familiar with in Brookhaven, so I thought of that, but I'm open to suggestions if -- I see we have the Inspector here. Do you have any, you know, concerns or anything to say about going to the -- was it the middle school, in Patchogue?

**MR. MOJICA:**

The middle school in Patchogue, if you want, would be fine with me. It's centrally located, and I have no pull whatsoever, but I don't know if Suffolk Community College on Nicolls Road, that seems like a good location logistically for people coming from the North Shore, South Shore or in between, might not be a bad way to go. Again, getting it in there, I have absolutely no influence that way, one way or the other. Just -- the idea just sounds like a good one.

**MR. HAWKINS:**

Legislator Gregory?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes?

**MR. HAWKINS:**

Is there a possibility of, I don't know if there's any statistics that would show where some of these instances have happened over the past maybe 12 months to be able to know locations of being able to have these meetings, because, you know, as what was mentioned, we want to have a meeting where the people and the public is going to attend. So we don't want to have a place where just a good general location but that's not where the stem of a lot of problems with the people in the community are addressing their concerns are.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right, right. Well, that's one of the issues that we're intending to look at. You know, the statistics don't necessarily tell the whole story, if you will. So -- but we do know that there's some issues in Brookhaven, wherever they may be. You know, I think there was an incident a few days, a few weeks ago in Mastic-Shirley; we know about Farmingville and we know about Patchogue. So I think, you know, we can find a location in Brookhaven.

I've heard concerns about the East End, whether it's the North Fork or South Fork, so we should find a location there, I think. And in Babylon, you know, we have the areas of migration. In Copiague, in my district, we have Latino immigrants; we have Polish immigrants. Wyandanch, we have Latino immigrants. Lindenhurst, we have Haitian immigrants. And West Babylon and North Babylon and Wyandanch and Wheatley Heights, so we have a large immigration population -- immigrant population in my district and in several areas. The church has -- Our Lady Of Miraculous Medal has worked very diligently with the immigrant community and welcomed them and provides services to them. So I thought Wyandanch at the church with Father Bill would be a great location.

But other than that, you know, I think, you know, we should try to come up -- I would like to, by this next meeting, maybe come up to at least two locations. I know that we have four, but I think what we need to understand that we need to get some hearings scheduled so that we could move along. It's going to be the end of the summer before we know it, and we need to contact whoever it is so we can schedule these meetings because everyone's schedule is going to get hectic. And that's another thing thing that we're going to have to talk about, who is going to be available, like timeframes, so that we can get these public hearings out and done with.

**DR. KILMNICK:**

Yeah, I don't want to throw a wrench into this. However, I mean unless you live around the block

where this meeting is going to take place, nothing is convenient in terms of getting to anywhere in this County. So I think what happens, a lot of people who are, at least what I know in terms of working with folks, is people who are victims of hate crimes don't feel like parts of the County are their turf. So I think wherever we have to -- wherever we're going to hold these meetings, it needs to be in a safe place where people feel that they can come to and talk about that.

So the library may or may not be. You know, and I think even though it may take a little bit longer, we should perhaps reach out to some of the other organizations that are working with folks day in and day out and find out from them, although I know that process could go on forever and ever and ever but at least get an idea so that we could be on, you know, safe turf for everyone to talk about what we need to hear about.

**MS. AHEARN:**

If we go ahead and at least could agree that Brookhaven would encompass the areas that you had said in Brookhaven Town, the Brookhaven Town Hall is what you were saying?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**MS. AHEARN:**

That it would cover at least the Farmingville and the Patchogue areas and then maybe we can do some outreach with the community organizations to ask them for assistance in submitting flyers out into the community and trying to gather support to come to that meeting.

**RABBI MOSS:**

If I may just add, though, what they were just saying is that there are people, members of the different communities who might feel uncomfortable going into a town hall. I certainly know that in the day labor and the immigrant community, there's a comfortability level that's very high for churches. I remember a couple years ago when I was very involved in those projects, the Church Of The Resurrection was really a very safe place for many of them, so similar to, DuWayne, as you had mentioned, you know, regarding the church in Wyandanch, I guess it was. Maybe one of churches in Brookhaven would be a good place to hold the event if we're not going to be down in Patchogue itself, and I can understand what you said before.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

And there's a suggestion made that there's a very large Portuguese-American Center on Middle County Road, I believe, in Farmingville -- or Portion -- it's Portion. I apologize. Yeah, Portion Road, that was suggested. That was a suggestion made to me also too for the Brookhaven area.

**REV. PEARSON:**

I just want to -- and I hate that this is going to be on the record, what I'm going to say. I'm not -- churches are safe havens for certain things, but they are not safe havens for other things. And so, there may be some discussion that takes place about biases that may conflict with churches and church beliefs, and so -- you know, that's fine if you have -- the church in Wyandanch that you talked about, but I don't think we want to have a tour of churches. You know, churches are safe havens for some things, but they're not safe havens for all things. And we don't want anyone to feel uncomfortable at these meetings. And I'm sorry that that's on the record, but I think I said it in a nice enough way in case it gets out, it doesn't get out wrong.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

We got you, Reverend.

[LAUGHTER]

**DET. REECKS:**

My concern now, we're running out of time. This is the second meeting. I think that we need to find out where the problem is and pick the spot, and once we have the first meeting up and running, that will get the second meeting up and running. I think we're trying to look at it globally instead of looking at it, you know, an individual town. If you have a town or you have a situation that we can all agree on right now, then let's pick that location, and let's move to that next meeting.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

That sounds good. So is everyone agreeable to Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Church in Wyandanch?

**DR. KILMNICK:**

Well, the community I'm representing, that would not be a safe haven, most likely.

**REV. PEARSON:**

That's my point.

**MS. AHEARN:**

What if we did -- what if we did -- Renee made a really good suggestion. The Portuguese-American Center on Portion Road is not affiliated with any particular religion, and it's not a government hall, and the --

**RABBI MOSS:**

Which hall?

**MS. AHEARN:**

The Portuguese-American Center on Portion Road, yeah, in Brookhaven. What if we did that and also Wyandanch at the same time? We schedule those two.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

We could do that but --

**RABBI MOSS:**

Where in Wyandanch?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I'm sorry?

**RABBI MOSS:**

Where in Wyandanch?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

It's off Straight Path.

**RABBI MOSS:**

So you're talking about the church there?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**RABBI MOSS:**

But in terms of David's comment --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yeah, he has an issue with that.

**REV. PEARSON:**

I'm trying to protect David.

**RABBI MOSS:**

Reverend Pearson mentioned the library and also Brentwood Library is a real center particularly for the Latino community in that area.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**REV. PEARSON:**

The African-American Advisory Board did a listening tour, and in Wyandanch, we went to the -- it's off Straight Path.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

The Senior Center?

**REV. PEARSON:**

It was a senior center. And It was a great turnout; it was fine; and it was pretty big.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay. We could do that. I could talk to the town. If everyone's -- you know, it's a government building.

**REV. PEARSON:**

But it was safe. It was good.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

So you would be comfortable with that?

**MS. AHEARN:**

Where is this location?

**DR. KILMNICK:**

Other than the fact that it's off Straight Path Road, yes.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I mean it's just -- oh, okay, joke.

[LAUGHTER]

**MS. ORTIZ:**

You didn't get it until now?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I'm a little slow sometimes.

[Laughter]

Okay. So what I'll do is I'll contact the Town to see if they would be -- and I'm sure they will be willing to accommodate us. I have a good relationship with the Supervisor. So that Wyandanch Senior Center. Now, we have to talk about timing. What's everyone's schedules as far as the last week in August? We want to have probably about three weeks.

**MR. MOJICA:**

You're talking about the last full week of August, correct?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**MS. AHEARN:**

Just before Labor Day.

**RABBI MOSS:**

The week of the 24th, you mean?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes. Everyone is good that week? It will be an evening meeting.

**RABBI MOSS:**

What time do you think -- what's a good time for people --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I would say about probably around 6:00.

**RABBI MOSS:**

Six to nine?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yeah.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

And if it doesn't run that long?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**DR. KILMNICK:**

Is 6:00 enough time for those who, you know, may be not -- you know, I don't think it's probably enough time.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

Maybe seven.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Seven?

**RABBI MOSS:**

Seven to nine?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

6:30?

**MS. ORTIZ:**

7 to 9.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I don't think 10:00 -- I mean --

**MS. ORTIZ:**

6:30 to 9, how about that?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Let's say 6:30 to 9. How about that?

**MS. ORTIZ:**

Probably won't get started till 7, anyway.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

So 6:30 to 9, the Wyandanch Nutrition Center. It's their nutrition center.

**RABBI MOSS:**

Which date?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

The week of --

**RABBI MOSS:**

It depends when they are available.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right, but that week everyone's pretty open?

**RABBI MOSS:**

The only day I'm not available is the Thursday night, the 27th.

**RABBI MOSS:**

Yeah. Well, Friday also.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

Fridays are out.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right. Well, I'm not going to do Friday. Okay. I'll try for Tuesday but --

**MS. ORTIZ:**

Did you say Tuesday was bad?

**DET. REECKS:**

No.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I'll try to get a time during that week, but preferably maybe I'm going to shoot for Tuesday, okay? All right? Now, from our last -- and we'll -- I guess we'll go through and we'll do e-mail. Make sure Max gets your e-mails, and we could talk about the other locations that way as we move along. But guest presentations, did anyone give any ideas or thought to presenters? I know Renee has done some work.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

There had been a suggestion made. We met with some of the Immigrant Advocacy Community. I think Dr. Valenzuela is here. I think I saw Nadia. But we reached out to the Southern Poverty Law Center, who, of course, they're like the premiere organization when it comes to tracking hate groups, and, you know, they have curriculums on -- for sensitivity trainings and so forth. So we reached out.

I haven't had a direct conversation, but Melissa Sostrin, a friend of mine and a colleague, did speak to them, and they that said they would be willing to participate, either present or somehow -- we're

not exactly clear yet. I still have to speak directly to the person at Southern Poverty Law Center to see what role they can play in helping us to develop our report or to at least give us some kind of presentation at one of the public hearings, so that still has to be settled. And I don't know the exactly the role they're willing to play and at what cost that would be, if it would definitely be pro bono or if there would be any cost involved, so we still have to clarify that. But they did say that they were very interested in helping and that they were already looking at Suffolk County and working on a report of their own.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

And also the Attorney General's Office.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

The Attorney General's Office had already done some kind of program out, I believe, in Riverhead a few months back, and they said they would be more than willing to come and do a presentation as well, and I think their report is almost complete. I spoke with Brian Herrington at the Attorney General's Office, and he said that as soon as that was available, they'd make it available to us. But they also said that they are more than willing to come and give us a presentation. And then also Nayar, of course, from the Brookhaven Anti-Bias Task Force and the Muslim community. So we've spoken to a few other organizations. If there's any other suggestion. I don't know.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Because my idea was to have the public have an opportunity to speak but also have various agencies or organizations come before us and present their ideas or concerns or issues with hate crimes so there could be, one, informative; two, to give us the information that we need so we can digest it so we can make whatever recommendations for the, you know, the report we're going to make. So I think that is important that we have representation from the immigrant community during the hearings for the bill when I put it up. You know, there was some concerns from the NAACP and the African-American community about having input, so I would ask to invite, you know, leaders from the NAACP or the African-American community. Renee said we spoke to the gentleman who's on the Brookhaven Anti-Bias Task Force. He would represent the Muslim Community. Were there any particular organizations, anyone else may know of that we haven't reached out to or any of the other organizations that we should be reaching out in your communities?

**DR. KILMNICK:**

We can have someone from our organization.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

Just press the mike.

**DR. KILMNICK:**

We can have someone from our organization present as well, the person that works with our Anti-Violence Project-Long Island.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Because as we all read in the paper lately, you know, my concern is that there have been at least three, if my count is accurate, within the past couple months, attacks, you know, in your communities. And I don't know why that is and why it's happening now, but it's certainly something that should be -- that we should all be concerned about, and we should definitely have someone here to address that. Laura, did you want to say something?

**MS. AHEARN:**

Did you speak with Nadia? I think you said you did -- from Long Island Immigrant Alliance -- and she'll be coming and presenting? Oh, there she is.

**RABBI MOSS:**

What I was going to suggest, though, is that I think that we should then extend the time of the

meeting. In other words, you said seven to nine. If you're going to have all of these professionals or representatives -- groups presenting, we want to make sure that we develop a level of trust and confidence by the community. And two hours is definitely not going to be enough because these groups -- what are we going to do; limit them to 15 minutes each? So already you have beyond even if you let all these groups you just mentioned speak, I think it's very important that the people who come who want to speak be given an opportunity, because otherwise, they're going to walk away saying, "What's this whole thing all about?" Because we could have a meeting here and bring these groups here. We don't have to have a public meeting to have these groups speak to us. And that might be another suggestion is that, these are public hearings, so we're going out into the community. These organizations that you just mentioned, we could have all them come here and speak to us here in this place to gain that information. I really rather see the emphasis there, the public speaking. That's what this whole thing is supposed to be all about, right?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right. Okay. That's definitely a good suggestion. Anybody else? So what we'll do is we'll contact everyone by e-mail so that if you have any suggestions, you could provide us the contact information, and maybe that's what we'll do. You know, we'll have just a separate meeting for organizations to come forward. I have already spoken to Commissioner Dormer, he's going to talk. The District Attorney's Office, they're going to talk. We may reach out to other jurisdictions and see how they handle hate crimes, what's going on in their various jurisdictions. We'll put Sergeant Reecks out there. He'll give us his information. I don't know how that's going to work, but somehow, we'll work it out. Right, that's actually a good suggestion. Then that way, we could just focus on the community and giving their feedback.

**RABBI MOSS:**

And I think after our first hearing, we can then make adjustments. I think the first one is very important to build up that level of confidence in the community, that we're not just -- you know, we're there for them. That's the purpose of this, I believe.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

And I also think the presentations are really for our benefit. So when we do come together to compile our report, that's all to help legitimize and improve our findings. I don't think that's really beneficial for the community or the purpose of the hearing, so I agree with you, Rabbi.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay. Now publicity itself, we're going to have a press release but the advertisement in the paper, but we need to do our due diligence and reach out to the various organizations and leaders and the communities, make sure that the word gets out. So somehow, we need to put together a network of contacts and maybe visit local organizations and talk about the different -- you know, our hearing schedule and have them -- you know, so they can do a full-court press in getting their people out.

**REV. PEARSON:**

What about a public service announcement? I don't know what that costs, but y'all got a lot of money.

**[LAUGHTER]**

Just joking. What about a public service announcement? We just did -- the County Executive did something not too long ago last month. And what about something, in addition to what you're saying, some kind of a public address announcement that News 12 or Channel One, I guess, Verizon can play? And something short and something, you know -- maybe even get a student, like was done at that particular -- to do something, I don't know, but some kind of a public address

announcement.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

That would be something we would have to look into. There's going to be a cost to it. We don't have much of a budget, but if we were to get someone to do it pro bono for us, then certainly, I would be willing to consider anything.

**MS. AHEARN:**

We have a database of churches, synagogues and houses of worship with their fax numbers, so I can give that to the Task Force, and we have all these agencies. We have a number of databases we can give to you for outreach.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**MS. AHEARN:**

When we're doing outreach, we just fax flyers out and then we also reach out to the community organizations and ask them to give those flyers to their population as well.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**MS. AHEARN:**

And then I'm sure the Presiding Officer through Kara can do press releases.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**MS. AHEARN:**

We did a public service announcement; it cost us about \$3,000 to create it and about \$3,000 to run it for about an 8-week period of time. And we can get -- Cablevision does pro bono ones, but it takes time. It takes a couple weeks to get it all written and produced, and, you know, if we have that time, it's a great outreach tool, but we find that if you go directly to the community organizations, they are really the ones who bring the population in.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

I also took the liberty to secure a Spanish translator who said she would make herself available at all four hearings. But may I suggest that I know it's not easy to find someone to volunteer, but if we're going to be in an area like Wyandanch, if there's a large Haitian community or another ethnicity, we could try and secure a translator -- Haitian, Creole -- you know, if there's other languages prominent in that community, we should try and be sure to have someone on hand.

**DET. REECKS:**

Again, I have to ask a question. What are we public announcing? Are we -- is it going to be a session for people to come in and complain about them being victims of hate crimes; are they coming in to complain about the Legislators? What exactly are we asking these people to come to this meeting for?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Well, they will always come to complain about the Legislators.

[LAUGHTER]

But We want to provide them an opportunity to come forward and, you know, talk about the concerns; you know, if they feel that hate crimes are not being addressed, that there is, you know, in their communities, whether it be, you know, if there's an undercurrent going on or maybe they're satisfied with the way things are, or maybe that they feel that because they're -- because of their status that they don't feel comfortable enough to come forward and report crimes, which I personally think that there may be a significant number of that. We don't know what they're going to say, but hopefully, they will come and say something. And if there are any people that have been victims themselves, we want to make sure that we provide them an opportunity to be heard and to document that information so that we can give it to the appropriate authorities for it to be investigated.

**DET. REECKS:**

All right. So, again, I need a little more clarification. This public announcement, this meeting we're going to have, this -- we're going to fax out to everybody. What are we telling the people this meeting is about? What exactly are they coming here for?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

We would tell them to come to -- to come out and speak and be heard about, you know, hate crimes in your community; you know, that we're here; we're willing to listen, and we want to listen and we want to hear their concerns so that we can address this issue.

**MS. AHEARN:**

What the Legislation said was that we were going to study and address why hate crimes in Suffolk County may not be reported.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**MS. AHEARN:**

And that -- which is exactly what you said.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**MS. AHEARN:**

And devise -- determine how frequently these acts occur and how often they are reported to police. We need more information to determine why bias-related crimes may not be reported so appropriate actions may be taken. And the Legislature wanted to ensure that racial tensions are addressed within the community and hate crimes of all forms are reported with all steps taken to address the problems and prevent their occurrence. So I would assume we would just take the -- that language and just put it right back out the community in that way.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right. Yeah.

**MR. KILMNICK:**

And What I think -- my impression of what I believe these hearings are going to be is to find out how things are, not now things should be right now. I mean, that's what we really need to find out. So, you know, if someone's coming to their home, like we reheard from several people in the past couple weeks, and their neighbors are yelling things at them, you know, "You faggot. You dyke. Get out of our neighborhood," you know, what is that like for the person coming home? And we understand what the barriers are to having that be looked at as a crime or a hate crime, but, you know, the environment that people are living in Suffolk County -- I mean, it's really -- in a lot of other places, but at least, you know, we're trying to do something here in this county. So, you know, I guess what I'm trying to say is these hearings are not to make Suffolk County look good. These hearings are so that we could find out what the real deal is from many different communities

and then come up with recommendations to address it here.

**REV. PEARSON:**

I think we have to be clear that we are talking about hate crimes and the definition of hate crimes versus eradicating racism. And we got to make sure that our hearings center on hate crimes and what hate crimes are, what constitutes a hate crime and how do we reduce hate crimes in our community versus how do we eradicate racism. Because that is not what this task force is, or at least I don't think is the focus of the task force. So we've got to be real clear, because in previous discussions that the African-American Advisory Board has had with the Police Department and with Detective Sergeant Reecks and the County Executive, et cetera have centered on hate crimes, and we needed a clarification on what a hate crime is. And somewhere in these hearings, somewhere in the beginning of the hearings, a brief, very brief presentation of what a hate crime is so that the hearings don't turn into NAACP complaints or immigrant-related issues outside of the hate crimes. We got to make sure that we keep the focus on what the focus is.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

I totally agree, but I believe that there's going to be intermingling of that all through it because some people -- you know, hate crimes on immigrants, it's going to be thoroughly related with immigration policy, you know, and hate crimes, African-American and others, is going to be based on racial prejudice, you know, and their feelings about, you know, why they were attacked because of the color of their skin or whatever the case may be. So I think that would be kind of my job as to kind of moderate and keep people focussed as to -- on the issue at hand and not kind of steer off into a different direction.

But to get back to Sergeant Reecks' point -- question -- you know, we want to make sure that people come forward and feel comfortable coming forward and addressing the concerns. I've said this before that I don't want this task force to be a kind of "I got you" task force, the County, "You know you did something wrong." Maybe we're doing it right. Maybe we're doing it better than other municipalities. Maybe it's just another -- you know, people, the comfort level of our residents not feeling comfortable enough to come forward. I don't know. I really don't know. But I think, you know, we should listen to what they have to say. I think that's, you know, that's an important piece of this. Because it's not necessarily from our eyes; it's from their eyes, and we're supposed to take in that knowledge, what they are going to give us because that's what's happening in our communities that we don't see everyday. And then we'll get the information from the quote unquote experts in the field, and then we can put all that together and make whatever recommendations we're looking to make and put that in our report. But we should be encouraging people to come forward and talk about their concerns or whatever their personal situations are.

**DET. REECKS:**

Okay. So that I am clear -- and I hope I am not taking up too much time -- so that I am clear, we are going to put out a flyer or whatever we're going to put out, and it's really going to be a flyer asking for anyone that has any gripes, any complaints, how they are being treated within the community. Is that basically what you are asking the public to come and do?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

No.

**DR. KILMNICK:**

I haven't heard one thing about gripes or complaints. It's about people telling their stories about their lives. If someone is telling their story about being harassed, more than harassed, feeling they're a victim of hate, that's not a complaint. It's their life, and we need to hear about that.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**DR. KILMNICK:**

And if it relates to something policy-wise, if it relates to something that we need to come up with a recommendation that we need to be doing a lot more outreach and a lot more education and holding people accountable for their words as well, then that's something that will come out of this. So, you know, it's not about a gripe or complaint. And you know what? If the woman in Mastic Beach who got beaten up by four people a couple weeks ago wants to come and complain, then you know what? She has every right to do so. She was beaten on her own property for being a lesbian, and she has every right to come down and do so. But we have to separate what -- you know, people are going to come down with strong feelings and strong actions if they were a victim of a hate crime or if they feel they are not safe in their communities, and we just have to, you know, syphon out why they don't feel safe.

**MR. HAWKINS:**

Are we going to be able to provide any information for them to know where to go?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**MR. HAWKINS:**

They'll come in, and they'll complain, but then there's no resource as for where.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right, Yes, absolutely.

**MS. AHEARN:**

Yeah. We're going to have advocates, our crime victim advocates present at each of the hearings, so one bilingual and one non-English speaking.

**MR. HAWKINS:**

Would it also be helpful to have some kind of pamphlets or something, you know, to give out to people who come in indicating "This is where you can go"?

**MS. AHEARN:**

If somebody was a victim of a crime, and they haven't reported it to law enforcement, of course, that's going to be something they're going to have to decide whether or not they want to. But they'll, our advocates, will be there to intake and provide information about the process if they would like to report, and I'm sure the police can make somebody available to take a report. And then, of course, during the intake process, we -- or advocates identify different resources that are available to provide support services to the victim and their family.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

And also, Laura, you said that that would be perfectly suitable if someone didn't want to speak on the record.

**MS. AHEARN:**

Yeah, we can intake, if a victim chooses -- and I said something to Legislator Gregory as well that we have a hotline that they can call, and we can put that on the releases as well. They can call if they would like to set up a time where they can have a personal meeting, and that information will be kept confidential. It's victim information, and it needs to be kept confidential. If they want to have their experience, I'm sure, shared, which they probably would if they would calling to have an intake done, if they want their experience to be shared with the task force, we can share that experience. And if they don't want their name released, then we can do that as well, not release their name. But we had spoken previously about the meeting about anonymity and the difficulty involved when somebody wants to make a report anonymously, there's nothing you can do to try to help the situation because there's nobody to talk to and ask questions and provide information to them.

**RABBI MOSS:**

I was going to say I think the nature of these types of public hearings is that people are coming forth telling their stories but also in many cases to say something wasn't done the right way, and I think this is what Sergeant Reecks is trying to express. That's the nature of that. Very few people are going to come those nights and say, "This agency, this person is doing a great job, and I want to come here tonight and compliment you," because that's not the nature of a public hearing in most cases. But I think that basically with the flyer or the publicity, it should be stated in as most neutral terminology as possible so it just doesn't skew the whole evening and sets a certain basic tone of welcome to everyone -- we don't have to go into all the details, and I think that would be helpful. So maybe before it's sent out, we could just all get a chance to look at it, an e-mail, to make sure -- you know, expresses an appropriate tone what the evening is all about.

I was going to ask a question. In terms of the procedure for the evening, is it going to be like when the Legislature holds its meetings, that each person is limited to five minutes or something?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**RABBI MOSS:**

The other question is, are we going to have a chance to ask the speaker questions or not? If we do, then, of course, that could extend this thing forever. So is it simply just hearing and our taking notes and that's it; is that what you imagined?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right, right.

**RABBI MOSS:**

Which is kind of frustrating, but yet it could be endless, of course. We are also going to have the opportunity for the write-ins we talked about last time?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

The e-mails?

**RABBI MOSS:**

People who feel uncomfortable coming to these events, for whatever reason, will have the ability to contact us through other means, e-mail or snail mail.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes. If you looked on the Suffolk County -- the Legislature's website, there's already, if you go to the Committees' tab, there's a tab now location for the task force. And as far as contact information, it has my e-mail, so people can contact me.

**RABBI MOSS:**

I was thinking, maybe as part of the publicity, it should be stated, again, in an appropriate way, those people, persons who do not -- are unable -- let us say, unable to attend that night, please know that you can speak your voice -- let your voice be heard through e-mail or snail mail, blah, blah.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

I stated last meeting, I think, generally at our hearings or our Legislative sessions, we do allow people to fax or e-mail in letters for the records -- we put into the record. The only thing is we don't allow it if it comes in anonymously, we don't publish it, but we can do it the same way.

**RABBI MOSS:**

I'm sorry. The other thing is that the Human Rights Commission, we can make available our mailing list to all the not-for-profits that we use constantly. I think I have like 1,000 names or something

like that. We could use all that, all the organizations once the flyer goes or whatever.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Great. Great.

**MR. KILMNICK:**

I was just going to say that I think it's -- we should leave open the option to ask a clarifying question, if need be.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right. Okay.

**MS. AHEARN:**

Because if we're accepting testimony and we're looking to identify a problem, there probably will be a need to ask questions because if the first question we might have, if somebody comes up and shares their experience with us of a hate crime and they do not articulate that they've reported it to the police, that's the very first question that I would want to ask, and what was your experience, if you did.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

My concern is that I don't want it to become an, you know, an opportunity for people to target members of the Task Force, you know, particular law enforcement, you know, "You did this." I would like to just take in the information. People are going to have concerns, I'm sure, about the way investigations have been handled or the way they perceive they've been handled or whatever. I don't want it to be a forum where, you know, someone can just come in and, you know, character assassinate someone unfairly. So just to try to keep it focused, if there need be a, you know, clarifying question, I think that's reasonable, but I don't want to get into back and forth.

**RABBI MOSS:**

I think it's very important that we remain a neutral body.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**RABBI MOSS:**

And that this is -- and I don't mean this pointedly at anyone sitting here -- but we do not have the right of rebuttal. In other words, if someone says even an attacking word against either us as individuals or the organizations we represent, we have to remain neutral. And this is a difficult thing to do, I know. I have experienced this with other public hearings but we're here to hear. I think that's very important.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Actually, that's very good point because once we get into -- we lose our neutrality, then we kind of lose our legitimacy, you know, so we need to really be cognizant of that.

**MS. AHERN:**

I think it might be a good idea for Sergeant Reecks to provide or present a short presentation to us on hate crimes because I know in my experience at our agency, in working with the police department, it's very important to understand what the boundaries of the law are before we begin to hear testimony because for one victim, they may feel as though it's a hate crime and urge everybody to ensure the police are moving forward with the hate crime, but it may not be just because the law is written the way that it is. Right, exactly. And I think it would help us to understand fully what the police department are dealing with in the pure definition of hate crime.

**REV. PEARSON:**

That's what I was alluding to earlier so that we keep the focus on hate crimes because, you know,

hate is a very broad, you know, place to be, and there's -- a lot of things can talk about hate, but what is actually a crime? Because I can call you a name, but if I haven't assaulted you when I called you the name, it's not a hate crime.

**DET. REECKS:**

To answer Laura's question, yes, I'll -- I can do a quick presentation. Again, that goes back to 25 minutes ago when I asked the question, what is this session going to be? Is it going to be the Police Department did not handle a hate crime or the story of the woman who got beat up? And we did make hate crime arrests. So my concern is that once we open this up to what a hate crime is, that's an interpretation that can be perceived or received the way the person wants to receive it. And now they change the story, that they're standing in front of the mike and make the story sound like a hate crime. Why do I know that? People call me all the time, "Well, what constitutes a hate crime?" and then tomorrow, I get a phone call from another person who, all of a sudden, all the factors now fit.

So my concern is this does not become a, "I was victim of a hate crime based on what you described to me. You did not do anything or you did something wrong or you did not charge the hate crime." We're going to get into a debate that I don't think that's what this entire Hate Crime Task Force is for. And my concern is, myself and Inspector Mojica are here as police officers within the police department, and I could tell you right now, I am not going to sit here and not rebuttal somebody telling me that they were a victim of a hate crime when clearly they were not. Or the other way, they were a victim of a hate crime and we did make a hate crime arrest with the laws that we have.

So my concern is this notification, this flyer we're sending out has to be clear what we're looking for. If we're looking for people to come in and invent the wheel, we can't do that. If we're looking for people to give their life story, we'll be here all night, as Rabbi Moss has clearly indicated. So this flyer has to be clear what this is going to be, and my concern is where is the outcry for that now that we haven't -- that we're trying to find? I don't see that outcry. I haven't heard that outcry. Yes, we had a couple big incidents, and we had a lot of unreported hate crimes. Well, there's a lot of unreported motor vehicle accidents going on right now also. If they are not reported, we can't help you with that. So we could have a session on unreported motor vehicles -- "I was involved in a motor vehicle. I didn't report it" --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

My next bill.

[LAUGHTER]

**DET. REECKS:**

That will be your next Task Force, how many unreported motor vehicle accidents that we have. So please understand me that with Inspector Mojica and myself here -- we can kid ourselves all we want -- it's going to focus down to the Police Department didn't do the right thing, and that's my concern how this is going to be received in the communities.

**MS. AHEARN:**

If you provide us, meaning Task Force members, with information about the law and what it is you're doing with hate crimes, I think it provides us an opportunity, when we hear testimony to be able to sift through what somebody's experience is, what you should be doing and what can be done. So I think it's invaluable if you can share that with us. And I don't think any of us on the Task Force are looking to try to find reasons to blame the Police Department. I think our objective is to try to find what the barriers are to try to encourage reporting of hate crimes and also to ensure that outreach is being done and to ensure that we reduce the amount of tension that is currently out there now.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**REV. PEARSON:**

I just want to add respectfully what the Police Department needs to hear and not rebut. You need to just let people -- all of us needs -- we did a listening tour, so this is not different for me because I have done a listening tour, or what we call the listening tour, the African-American Advisory Board, and we went to the fore neighborhoods, and we just listened. We didn't rebut. We didn't talk, and, of course, there was a lot of finger-pointing at government. There was a lot of finger-pointing at the Police Department and other -- but people need to have a forum that they could be heard, and all of us are going to hear things that are going to rattle our chains and that are going to -- that we can't take personal. We've got to listen and we've got to be able to hear.

And one of the things that is not going on or that is going on is the immigrant community does not feel comfortable reporting, so there are a lot of hate crimes that have possibly occurred in our County that has not been reported because people don't feel that they have a place of comfort to be heard. And so I just caution us to be careful because there are going to be complaints against the Police Department, against government, against political leaders who have had a stance on something. There are going to be complaints, as Rabbi Moss and others have said. We have to remain neutral and just hear and listen because once you start trying to provide an answer -- once you start trying to provide an answer, then that's going to turn into a circus, and it's going to become a very unfriendly. And once the first hearing turns out to be unfriendly, then people are not even going to come to the other three.

So the other thing I'll caution against, then I'll shut up, is when we did the listening tour with the African-American -- you've got to be very careful that it doesn't become a political arena for people to show up and politicize what we're trying to do because that happened when we went to Brookhaven, and that meeting turned into something else. The political leaders started giving reasons for why they made comments or reasons why they took a stance one way or another, and the meeting totally changed. So I just caution of those two things: Be careful of answering, rebutting, and be careful of this becoming -- being politicized.

**RABBI MOSS:**

How do you prevent the second? How would you suggest -- how do you prevent the second from happening?

**REV. PEARSON:**

You tell certain individuals that it's best if they do not come to these hearings.

**RABBI MOSS:**

If the person shows up, what do you do then?

**REV. PEARSON:**

That's the moderator's responsibility because it will change the complexity of the meeting. It will lose focus. It will become about that, those political lead persons versus the concerns of the people.

**DET. REECKS:**

Okay. So we're back to my question. The flyer is going to read, "This is a listening tour. Please come in and tell your story," period?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Paraphrasing, yes.

**DR. KILMNICK:**

I think we shouldn't really -- if someone's experience doesn't fit the definition of a hate crime, we shouldn't discount it as well because it may be that the law needs -- I'm just thinking out loud -- you know, that the law may need to be expanded. And in terms of neutrality, if someone does say something that has some bias in it, I believe we do need to be neutral, but we also have a

responsibility to address it. And so -- and I think that that's important because a lot of times why hate and bias happens is because it goes unaddressed. So if something is happening right in front of our face, where they are attacking another community, then I believe it's -- I believe it's the responsibility to address that. I think we have -- I feel I have a responsibility.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

And you're right --

**REV. PEARSON:**

I differ with that because it's a hearing, and if we're going to listen, if someone gets up and says, "I don't like black people," that's -- we're here, we may hear something like that. I'm not going to respond to that person in a public way because the Newsday article the next day is going to totally take us off what we're trying to focus on, so I just caution.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

And you're not going to change that person. No matter what you say, you are not going to change what's in that person's heart. But I think it's important, and I think David hit the nail on the head is that, you know part of this is going to be education. You know, many people who think they understand what the hate crimes law is really don't understand it. So I think there's going to have to be an education is going to be part of the process, informing people what hate crimes -- the hate crime law is and its, you know, legalities, and I think that's part of what we're looking to address is adequate. Do we need to, you know, make recommendations to the State Legislature to change it, to modify it, expand it? But certainly, I don't think anyone that's going to come to the hearing understands truly what hate crimes -- you know, the definition of a hate crime.

**RABBI MOSS:**

But they're still -- as Sergeant Reecks said, they're still going to hear it the way they want to, and the bottom line is that with things like this, there are those people are going to come here and they know what they are going to say before they even -- they've figured out what they are saying. They now have the forum. And the sad part of it is we're going to hear some words of bigotry and some words of hatred come from people. And I think our job, after this, is to sift through it all and really find out. And maybe, to answer Detective Sergeant Reecks' question, this first one is going to be the adventure. Okay?

This is the challenge, the first one.

And then after the first one -- and God-willing, we get through it, okay, survive it -- then we can assess where we're going to go from here. And I don't mean to sound negative to begin with, because I don't mean to be that at all, but we might determine this is a fruitless endeavor to have these public hearings because really we're really doing is giving people the opportunity to shout out, you know, with no purpose except a cathartic, which is okay in terms of counseling, but not necessarily in terms of our entire Suffolk County in healing, which is what we will ultimately want to seek. But I think that, really, let's just see how it goes and then afterwards assess what we did wrong, what could be better for the next time, and again really what our purpose is. But we're going to hear things that we don't want to hear, and that's what it's all about as well.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right. And all the information that's going to be provided is going to be taken by Colleen and her organization and they're going to be putting it in the report and submitting it to us. So, you know, it's going to be difficult to sift through a lot of it, but I do believe that we're going to get some information -- some important information to allow us to evaluate what's going on and what recommendations we have to -- I keep saying recommendations as if we're going to change something, but I mean what we're going to add into the report, because we don't know yet if we're going to change anything yet, recommend or change anything.

**RABBI MOSS:**

As I mentioned last time was is that it's very important, though, that after this is all over, we do

offer something to the community.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right.

**RABBI MOSS:**

Even if it's just an analysis but maybe it will lead to some kind of a change in our community, whatever it's going to be.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Does anybody else have any input? If not, I think we have no further business.

**MS. ORTIZ:**

So before we adjourn, we're settled on one hearing for sure? I just want to go over it one more time.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

We're going to schedule the one for now, the Wyandanch Senior Center, the week of the 24th. Actually, I'll shoot for the 25th. Rabbi Moss, you're not good for Thursday and obviously Friday. So I should have an answer to you guys by e-mail relatively quickly and --

**RABBI MOSS:**

Might I suggest that after that one, we set the next three up entirely.

**MS. AHEARN:**

Are you going to send the sample flyer around for the everybody's review --

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**MS. AHEARN:**

-- what's going to be released for the press release and flyer? Okay.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Make sure Detective Sergeant gets final approval, gets to reads it before we approve it.

**MS. AHEARN:**

So there will be a press release and then there will be a flyer?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**MS. AHEARN:**

So the flyer then will be in English and Spanish and also their -- Hoy, you can send in Spanish, a press release to them too. So both have to be in English and Spanish.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes, I'll do that. Anybody else? We'll stand adjourned --

**MR. O'NEILL:**

Can I make a comment?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**MR. O'NEILL:**

The reason I asked at the last meeting if you were going to address -- my name is Michael O'Neil, and I'm from East Hampton Anti-Biased Task Force. Last meeting, you said you would that you would hear from the audience. I'm glad that you're permitting it now.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

We're not, though.

**MR. O'NEILL:**

You're not?

**LEG. GREGORY:**

No. This is just an organization or executive session meeting. When we have our next meeting, which we're hoping to be the week of the 24th of August, preferably Tuesday, the 25th, we're going to have a public hearing where the public can come forward, yourself. We'll make sure that -- you can give your contact information to my aide, Max Rose, to make sure that we get the notice to you and whoever else so they can come and speak.

**MR. O'NEILL:**

Okay. I'd suggest that you're making a large mistake in your approach and you're asking for anecdotal evidence, and you're not addressing the reasons why you're having this Task Force, which is to find out why hate crime is under-recorded. And I urge you, instead of asking the public why they don't report hate crimes, ask the institutions, the Legislature, the Police.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

We're going to do that. I mentioned that. If you heard, I mentioned that we're looking at other municipalities, just for their experiences. The District Attorney's Office is willing to come forward. I spoke to the Commissioner, Commissioner Dormer, he is going to come forward. We're going to have Detective Sergeant Reecks give us a brief -- or a presentation on hate crimes and I guess investigations from his unit. So we'll have the appropriate agencies there -- also the Attorney General's Office, the Southern Poverty Law Center from an outside perspective as well as an internal perspective.

**MR. O'NEILL:**

And I hope you have some more people who are considered expert in this area of under-recording.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Right. And that was part of my questions about -- and I surveyed the group about any other organizations or people that may be of interest, and I'll be certainly be glad to take your recommendations. We'll talk to you. We're not trying to exclude you. You probably just didn't hear me. I know I speak softly sometimes.

**MR. O'NEILL:**

Thank you.

**LEG. GREGORY:**

Okay.

***[THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 4:18 PM]***