

had met with WOW to discuss the presentation. She added that the documents and press releases submitted by WOW were not endorsed by the Board and did not represent the opinions of Board members, and that the Board would listen but was not scheduled to vote or deliberate on the topic that evening. Ms. Freiman stated that Ms. Sullivan Woods would moderate the discussion and reviewed the rules for public comment. Ms. Sullivan Woods introduced Ms. Chalmers of WOW, and explained that the presentation was from WOW's perspective and intended to be educational for the public regarding why the Town should approve the proposal.

World of Wellesley (WOW) Presentation

Ms. Chalmers, President of the World of Wellesley, came before the Board. She stated she hoped the community would be open and respectful of the request to honor Indigenous Peoples Day instead of Columbus Day. She stated the presentation would include several speakers reviewing their support for the petition. Ms. Andeg, Ms. Hammond, Ms. Munro, Ms. Katz, and Ms. Jones each spoke to their background and views that influenced them to support the petition. Ms. Munro spoke to the documented education and history regarding Columbus. She stated that most Americans do not know the history of Indigenous People with relation to Columbus. She added that the petition is asking for the community to replace Columbus Day with a positive vehicle of education. Ms. Hammond and Ms. Katz pointed to the education curriculum in the Wellesley Schools and each stated that it should be revised to incorporate a focus on how Indigenous People were viewed and treated by Columbus.

Ms. Chalmers thanked the Board and the community for listening to the presentation and stated there would be additional community education and dialogue for this topic.

Public Comments on WOW Request for Board Consideration

The following citizens came before the Board to speak:

Bruce Franco – 6 Wellesley Avenue

Donna Ticchi – 31 Thomas Road

Michael Gigante – 39 Fuller Brook Road

Amy Benjamin – 314 Walnut Street

Dr. Maria Lombardo (Italo Club Member, Newton, MA)

Sophie Hurwitz – 21 Wellesley College Road

Deed McCollum – 6 Pickerel Terrace

Jennifer Fallon – 80 Donezetti Street

Miguel Lessing – 45 Russell Road

Ralph Tortorella – 17 Ox Bow Road

Jeanne Mayell – 27 Seaver Street

Scott Fraser – 4 Stearns Road

Katy Hanson – 9 Bacon Street

Leslie Laud – 46 Wellesley Avenue

Paul Cremonini – 396 School Street

Stephen Wroblewski – 72 Linden Street

Greg Hurray – 9 Bacon Street

Philip Jutras – 90 Parker Road

Michelle Chalmers – 11 Ashmont Road, World of Wellesley

Emma Hammond – 19 College Road, World of Wellesley Speaker

Joan Andeg – Wellesley, World of Wellesley Speaker

Mahtowin Munro – World of Wellesley Speaker

Jacqueline Katz – 50 Rice Street, World of Wellesley Speaker

Kisha James – 160 Central Street, World of Wellesley Speaker

Comments from citizens speaking in favor of the proposal included:

- Other cities and towns have adopted Indigenous Peoples Day because Columbus Day is an oversimplified version of discovery.
- General understanding of history and the teaching of history has changed and so should the way history is celebrated.
- The proposal is intended to be respectful rather than erasing history.
- The month of October is National Italian American Heritage Month and offers opportunities to celebrate the contributions of Italians in America in ways other than celebrating Columbus.
- Many people don't know the true history and background of Columbus and by learning that history, there is a need to reassess how he is viewed in America.
- The history of how Native Americans had been treated in America needs to be taught and a day of recognition is needed to begin an education process in the country.
- Six states and 130 towns and cities have replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day and Wellesley shouldn't compromise but join the others.
- Columbus was not typical for his time but unusual and was brought back to Spain and jailed for his crimes against people and that is not a person to celebrate.
- There was no "age of discovery" because people were already inhabiting the land; they were not discovered, but conquered.
- Education should include the treatment of Indigenous People in America as it is with the treatment of other invasions in countries throughout the world.

Comments from citizens speaking in opposition of the proposal included:

- Recognizing Indigenous People is important; however, removing Columbus does not teach the whole story but rather the education curriculum should incorporate both sides in a balanced format.
- Several questions regarding the influence of World of Wellesley requesting changes to the curriculum in the schools.
- Italian Americans recognize Columbus' spirit and record in entrepreneurship and discovery, and changing the holiday would disrespect the age of exploration.
- Italian Americans celebrate their Italian heritage and Italians that contributed to American success and feel associated with the celebration of Columbus Day.
- The Columbus Day National holiday was established to represent the discovery of the "New World" and if the true reasoning of changing the name of the holiday is to recognize errors in documenting Columbus' discovering America, then why is there not a proposal to change Columbus Day to a holiday to honor discovery and exploration.
- Taken in context of the times Columbus' behaviors were no different than others.
- Changing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day is about replacing history and a compromise can and should be found.
- Italian Americans have faced discrimination in America and making a choice between one group and other creates more animosity.
- Several individuals expressed that there are ways to compromise without celebrating or ignoring any particular group of citizens. That they did not want to diminish the sacrifices and achievements of either Indigenous People or Italian Americans.
- The Italo-American Club of Wellesley takes pride in its Italian heritage and its commitment to Wellesley and voted its support to continuing celebrating Columbus Day and welcome compromise of celebrating without exclusion of anyone.
- A letter from the Italo Club of Wellesley, previously sent to the Board, was read into the record that expressed their basis for opposition of removing Columbus Day from the calendar.

Next Steps

Ms. Sullivan Woods stated the Board would not deliberate at the meeting. She thanked those who participated for being respectful. She added that the Board will communicate in the future regarding its next steps on this topic. She noted that the Board of Selectmen does not have a role in the curriculum and those who have questions regarding curriculum should contact the School Committee.

Mr. Morgan stated the Board would in the future deliberate and consider the World of Wellesley request and will have an open and public process regarding the petition. He stated that the World of Wellesley was founded in the nineties after a racist event in Town and that the Board of Selectmen has worked with WOW to promote diversity and understanding in Wellesley. He added that the Board and others support WOW as an organization but do not necessarily support all of the petitions and positions brought forward by WOW.

4. Executive Director's Update

Ms. Jop reviewed the minutes for approval. She stated that the NRC Director will be taking the lead on the Town's submission of a Municipal Vulnerability Grant. She added that the grant program assists with municipalities to complete a climate change vulnerability and resiliency study. She reviewed the purpose of the program and the study. She noted the commitments of the Town should they be chosen to participate in the grant. She added that in order to apply a letter of support was needed from the Board. The Board briefly discussed its support for the grant application.

Upon a motion by Ms. Freiman and seconded by Ms. Sullivan Woods, the Board voted (4-0) to approve the minutes of the April 1, April 2, and April 8, 2019 meetings.

Upon a motion by Ms. Freiman and seconded by Ms. Sullivan Woods, the Board voted (4-0) to approve the letter supporting the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant and to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board.

5. New Business and Correspondence

Mr. Morgan stated that for those who had watched or participated the meeting that had comments, questions, or suggestions for the Board, they should send those to the Board by emailing sel@wellesleyma.gov

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Juliani Room.