

Interfaith group hosting meeting with mayor, police chief on racial justice in policing

Standard-Times

Published December 1, 2020

A virtual meeting will be held on Thursday by the Fall River-based **United Interfaith Action** group featuring New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell and Chief of Police Joe Cordeiro on the topic of racial justice in policing.



The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. and those interested in taking part can register by visiting bit.ly/uiacamdec3.

“When George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis, New Bedford residents took to the streets to peacefully protest such conduct and call for deep changes,” a press release from United Interfaith Action (UIA) stated. “Now we move to the needed policy changes to keep everyone safe and so justice for all is done. We move from protest to policy so we have the power of justice for all.”

On Sept. 24, UIA held a largely attended meeting with Fall River Police Chief Jeffrey Cardoza.

“It was a positive meeting and Chief Cardoza agreed to work for many of the proposals that UIA brought to him that night,” the release states.

Earlier this week, UIA organized a meeting with Fall River Mayor Paul Coogan “as a next step in our work on racial equity in policing. Now we are meeting with New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell and Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro on these critical issues.”

“We believe this is a time for all institutions, City Hall, police departments, schools, universities, hospitals, companies to reckon with their policies and practices that create racial disparities and lessened opportunities.”

Proposals will be made in a number of areas to strengthen safety for all and make our police departments as good as we need them to be, the release states.

Those areas include:

- Community Representation of our diversity
- Community Accountability of our Police Departments
- Training Initiatives & Demilitarization
- Re-Investing Funds in our community
- Re-envisioning policing, public safety, and community peace-keeping

UIA is made up of religious congregations “putting faith into action since 1996.”

The group’s work has included “expanding after school programs and ESOL and GED programs, improving public safety, helping get two increases passed in the minimum wage law, and helping pass the Paid Family Medical Leave law taking effect on Jan. 1.”

UIA says the group’s current focal areas are education, immigration, addiction and public safety/police reform.