

**Town of West Hartford
Human Rights Commission
Mission Statement**

“The West Hartford Human Rights Commission fosters mutual understanding and respect among people, and encourages equality of treatment of all people, regardless of race, color, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, civil union status, gender identity or expression, marital status, familial status, genetic information, age, economic status, lawful source of income, national origin or ancestry, veteran status, or present or past history of physical, mental, intellectual or learning disability including, but not limited to blindness.”

Meeting Minutes 12.3.20

**Town of West Hartford
Human Rights Commission
WebEx
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, December 3, 2020**

- **Attendance**

- Sarah Raskin
- Barry Walters
- Brian Greenleaf
- Esam Boreay
- Krishna Adhikari
- Dawn Ennis
- Adrienne Billings-Smith
- Pramod Pradhan
 - Call-in Guest participant: Jay Tooland, Farmington HRC
 - Call-in Guest: Yukiyo Iida
 - Call-in Guest: Tracy Wu Fastenberg

6:01 PM Meeting called to Order: Virtual Meeting Statement (Sarah Raskin)

6:03 PM Roll Call (Sarah Raskin)

- **Sarah: Opened up discussion with Public Comments**

- **Guest 1: Public Comment 1: Yukiyo Iida**

- Confronted West Hartford Democratic Town Committee (DTC) on Press release that was issued in November in regards to planned Silent Vigil which contained racist language toward Asian-Americans
- Provided suggestions/plan of action in order to work toward the goal of anti-racist leadership and policy in the community (see attached correspondence*) signed by members of the West Hartford Community

Barry: Clarified this issue dealt with Democratic Town Committee and not the Town Council

Ms. Iida: Agreed that the initial issue deals with DTC, however feels the Town Council should take into consideration participating in the suggested plan of action to ensure this does not happen again at any level in town leaderships

Sarah: Read portion of letter (specie plan of action items) and suggested moving the topic to the next meeting

Adrienne: Agreed that the issue should be moved the next meeting and that the these sorts of issues need to be acknowledged rather than minimized.

Barry: Agreed—stated topic is applicable to entire town leadership

Krishna: Agreed—need to have discussion with committee (DTC) members present

Esam: Agreed-supports action items listed in the letter

Dawn- Agreed—voices need to be elevated, especially of those that are harmed and continue to suffer due to lack of representation and

Sarah: Willing to collaborate with others in the community who signed letter at next meeting

Ms. Iida: Would like to work with commission and collaborate on how to move forward with the action items

Guest 2: Public Comment Tracy Wu Fastenburg

- Signed the letter and thanked commission for taking up the issue.

Guest 3: Jay Tooland, Chair of Farmington HRC

- Announced that Farmington will be holding its first Human Rights day on December 8, 2020
- Powerpoint presentation and proclamation, excerpts from UDHR will be read by Farmington Town Council Chair
- Will recognize Women who created UDHR (Eleanor Roosevelt)
- Wants to do similar event to WHHRC in the future
- Supports Statewide meeting of HRC chairs and collaboration

- Sarah: Mentioned connecting with Herb Brockman and (?)
- 10 HR Commission across the state
- Agrees HRCs need to get together

UDHR Event Update:

- All Readings have been turned in
- Dance from Donna (needs name for caption)
- No Latanya Farell this year
- Kate Callahan
- Waiting on Conard Voices of the World should know Saturday 12/5/20
- Julie Choeffel- Poem
- Mixshawn (sp?) opening
- Song
- Tekisha Everett main speaker

Sarah & Dawn: Discussion on getting Tekisha Everett on the schedule to get a recording. Hoping to connect with her tomorrow 12/4/20.

Sarah: Option on Introduction of event: Pre-recorded introduction or live introduction

Dawn: Pre-recorded w/chairs to make human connection

Adrienne: Agreed

Esam: 1. Intro slide that will be presented for people to read as we wait for ppl to enter the event. 2. Welcome video

Sarah: Will create a slide with agenda, music and will try to put it together tomorrow 12/4/20 and send out to commission for review and comments.

Barry: Intro: All Chairs (newly elected and previous) should do Welcome Video

Sarah: Logistically how we will we do that

Barry; Suggested Zoom recording

Sarah: Has program to record the zoom video

Sarah & Dawn Discussion on: Transgender Day of Remembrance and making sure it is acknowledged next year

Nominations of New Positions

Sarah & Barry: Voting procedures (email or text)

Krishna; Suggested email for proper paper trail

Pramod: Agreed

Barry: Agreed

Sarah: Announces open positions

(2) Co-chairs

(1) Secretary

(1) Treasurer

Barry: Explains that Barry and Krishna's terms are ending at the end of the year.

- Excludes Barry and Krishna from being nominating for a position
 - Barry plans to stay on until position is filled
 - Krishna announced his departure at the end of the year.

Sarah proceeds with nominations:

Sarah: Nominates Adrienne Billings-Smith for co-chair

- Dawn seconds
- Esam *
- Barry *

Barry Nominates Esam Boreay for co-cahir

- Adrienne seconds
- Dawn*

Sarah Nominates Dawn Ennis for secretary

- Adrienne seconds

Sarah Nominates Brian Greenleaf for Treasurer

***Votes emailed to Pramod for confirmation of nominations and count

Future HRC Meetings

Sarah inquired about whether to keep meetings on the 1st Tues. of the month or moving

Adrienne: Suggested moving to another day like Wed. bc of the battle with BOE and the likelihood of doing virtual meetings for another year.

Sarah: Wondered if there was any history of why meeting was on Tues.

Pramod agreed and didn't know of any history

Sarah & Barry: Agreed became trying with having business with BOE while conducting HRC meetings

Sarah: Will connect new chairs to Cindy Porrini to initiate talks about moving meetings to 1st Wed. of the month starting in 2021.

HRC Calendar

Sarah Suggested going through calendar and picking events to recognize

Adrienne suggested multiple recognitions due to the many worthy topics using social media

Sarah: Suggested still looking through events

Barry: Suggested and informed of multiple ways to recognize several events on facebook and not everyone has to have a long research acknowledgment but something recognizing the day.

Esam: Agreed with Barry

Pramod: Promote all of them and on more important ones do videos and highlight

Barry: Agreed events to post can be pre-scheduled through facebook options

Adrienne: Volunteered to help Sarah with research on highlighted events

Commission Agreed: January will highlight Commemoration of Jewish Holocaust and MLK Jr. Da

MLK Celebration:

Adrienne B. (liaison):

- Email was sent to committee about starting the planning of event. Spoke about collaboration with WHAASCO, Noah Webster and Town doing virtual breakout groups

Adrienne: Announced the remains of Goodman Green to Unity Green

- Proposition presented to the First Congregational Church of West Hartford and Town in June
- Spoke about collaborating with the MLK Jr. Committee in using theme to focus around Unity Green and use the theme presented by MLK committee
- Spoke about the meaning behind Unity Green

Sustainable CT

Barry: Simple process, they act as fiduciary for organizations or individuals that aren't 501 (c)(3)s, allows groups improve community, grassroots program,

Commission could benefit from the grant if there are events or causes it would like funded in the future.

Citizen Review Board Update:

Barry: Has not heard anything further

Energy Plan: West Hartford Energy Commission

Barry: followed up with an email and has not received any further correspondence (finds timing odd)

One Community for Equity Event: Roszena Haskins

Sarah: Wanted to know if anyone else was attending

- Sarah attending
- Adrienne attending under another umbrella
- Barry may attend

Sarah: Unable to share clean energy document

Barry: Suggested postponing the discussion to Jan and reading the document in it's entirety ignorer to fully discuss the topic and issue at hand (read, comment, provide support or not)

Barry: Invite Ben Wenograd and/or Town Manager Hart

Female Mutilation Legislation: J. Kehough (sp?)

Sarah: postpone to next meeting

Barry: Suggested representatives come in for all these topics that are being postponed

Elected Positions: Unanimous Decision

Co-chairs: Adrienne Billings-Smith & Esam Boreay

Secretary: Dawn Ennis

Treasurer: Brian Greenleaf

Open Discussion:

Krishna: Active member of HRC since 2015/16

- Acknowledged the leadership of Barry and Sarah
- Proud of leadership and the progress of the commission

Barry:

- Acknowledged the movement of the commission and is excited about the future of the HRC

Sarah: Excited about how the commissions leadership and opinions are finally being valued

Pramod: Thanked Barry, Sarah and Krishna for their leadership

7:27 Meeting Adjourned (motion by Barry, 2nd Krishna)

****Barry Walters disclosed post-meeting that he is a member of the WHDTC**