

## **West Hartford Human Rights Commission**

Minutes for Meeting of April 7, 2021 recorded by Dawn Ennis, Secretary

Start of meeting: 7:07 p.m. EDT

Attendance taken by Co-Chair Adrienne Billings-Smith

No guests are in attendance at this meeting.

### **In addition to ABS, commissioners in attendance in alphabetical order:**

Esam Boraey, Co-Chair

Dawn Ennis, Secretary

Theodore Mancini

Sarah Raskin

Pramod Pradhan, Administrative Liaison was also in attendance

### **Absent:**

Brian Greenleaf, Treasurer

Aurora Melita

Michael Pincus

Kristen Sowell

ABS announced that Rabbi Michael Pincus will remain a commissioner until such time as his written resignation is received by the Town Council.

Those present constituted a quorum, according to ABS.

Minutes of March meeting were then approved unanimously.

### **Old Business:**

Town of Compassion Awards: prior nominators to be contacted by April 12, 2021.

New nominations due to commissioners by May 19, 2021.

Final recommendations to be sent to Town Council in June (date not specified).

Sarah Raskin to email criteria to commissioners by April 16, 2021 so that they are ready to be send April 19, 2021.

Dawn Ennis assigned to assist Sarah Raskin in this task.

Town Council's role is to approve recommendations and Mayor Cantor then announces winners.

ABS announced Juneteenth Independence Day Celebration, approved as an official town holiday by Town Council on Nov. 24, 2020, is set for June 19, 2021, and will feature a ceremony and community event.

Esam Boraey asked if WHHRC is connected to Juneteenth celebration. ABS responded that there was no official connection.

Continued:

## **West Hartford Human Rights Commission**

Minutes for Meeting of April 7, 2021 page 2

EB asked for clarification on who selects winners of the Town of Compassion Awards. SR responded that commissioners recommend winners and the Town Council decides whether to accept or reject our recommendations.

ABS announced Unity Green dedication will take place June 20, 2021, following the vote by the congregation of First Church of Christ, Congregational, to rename the green on Nov. 29, 2020, which was the result of efforts led by ABS and the Concerned Parents of Color Coalition.

DE was asked to provide a report on West Hartford Town Pride Committee events that are planned for June, which will be delivered to commissioners via email and entered into the minutes at next month's WHHRC meeting on Wednesday, May 5, 2021.

### **New Business:**

The question of whether WHHRC's Social Media Policy has been approved by commissioners was raised by ABS. DE noted the policy was approved in a voice vote at the March meeting and offered to send commissioners the results of that vote from the minutes of that meeting.

SR asked to reconfirm Town of Compassion Awards deadlines.

Ted Mancini reported on the issue of two West Hartford football coaches who claim their civil rights were violated when the league banned them for two years for using email addresses, allegedly inappropriately, for a private, non-league business they started. The State Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities is investigating their claims. TM intervened on behalf of the coaches in hopes of brokering a settlement, but was rebuffed as it is now a legal matter and is being handled by the attorneys for both sides. TM noted there was nothing in the league bylaws to justify the suspension, and that a warning or perhaps a one week suspension would have been more appropriate, based on his more than 10 years' experience as a football coach and president of the league. TM said he could not recall any instance in which a coach was banned for even as long as one year, let alone two. He promised to keep commissioners updated on that situation.

### **Future Meeting Topics**

ABS mentioned that the interfaith leaders who were invited to appear at this meeting of the WHHRC would be invited to the next meeting on Wednesday, May 5, 2021. Their appearance was postponed due to the Jewish observance of Yom HoShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Continued

## **West Hartford Human Rights Commission**

Minutes for Meeting of April 7, 2021 page 3

The WHHRC meeting on Wednesday, June 2, 2021 will include a discussion of gender identity, sexual orientation and expression in consideration of June being recognized as Pride Month. ABS invited commissioners to send her ideas via email.

DE suggested that the WHHRC invite members of the Town of West Hartford Civilian Police Review Board to speak to the commissioners once they are selected and announced. This could take place as early as Wednesday, July 7, 2021, provided the board members are approved, announced and that any would agree to meet with the WHHRC at the meeting currently scheduled for that date.

Pramod Pradhan suggested we extend the same invitation to other boards serving the Town of West Hartford, such as those listed on the Town's website which is <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/government-services/boards-commissions>.

SR proposed a future agenda item be [H.R. 40](#), which will be considered by the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday, April 14, 2021. The proposed legislation would authorize a study of proposals for reparations to Black U.S. citizens and develop proposals for such reparations for slavery of Blacks that were promised following the Civil War. Details here: <https://judiciary.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=4499>

TM moved to adjourn.

SR seconded.

WHHRC meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m. EDT on April 7, 2021.