

WEST HARTFORD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes of November 3, 2021, Meeting

FOR FUTURE REFERENCE: Public Comments welcome via phone, by dialing 408-418-9388 Access Code 173 498 0586

Meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by Co-Chair Dawn Ennis

Attendance:

Esam Boraey, Co-Chair (EB) was present
Dawn Ennis, Co-Chair (DE) was present
Aurora Melita, Secretary (AM) was present
Ted Mancini (TM) was present
Sarah Raskin (SR) was present
Eric Schoenberg (ES) was present
Pramod Pradhan, Liaison and Facilitator (PP) was present
Tekisha Dwan Everette (TDE) was present
Kristin Sowell (KS) was absent due to an illness

Minutes:

DE made note that tomorrow begins the celebration of Diwali, that we are also celebrating Native American Awareness Month and that it's also Transgender Awareness Month in November.

DE made a motion to accept the October 2021 meeting minutes, EB moved, and seconded by TDE, passed unanimously

DE yielded to PP to introduce invited guest speakers for the meeting who even though they didn't make it on the agenda today are just as important to the Human Rights Commission's work. Passed to PP to introduce guests.

PP introduced Kris and Kari from Mayor's Youth Council. They have been recently formed and planning to do incredible work around town and see youth as the future of this town. PP Handed over to them to share who they are and to see if the Commission can do anything to support them in achieving their goals.

Kari Karp (KK), staff liaison to Mayor's Youth Council, started in 2021. A group of 11 students that come from public private and home schools who represent grades 9 – 12 and give their insider knowledge to the mayor and other commissions. Also, can collaborate with other commissions.

Kris Rimal (KR), Co-Chair of Mayor's Youth Council's International Night and Diversity Night Subcommittee

KK shared that there are three subcommittees created on the Mayor's Youth Council that will focus on outreach. They are the Mental Health Action and Awareness Subcommittee, Teen Social Events Subcommittee, and International Night and Diversity Night Subcommittee. Mentioned that years ago the town had a similar event called, Hello Weha, where they would like to do something similar with the addition to including cultural businesses.

Next meeting of the Mayor's Youth Council, that are open to the public, will be held on Tuesday, November 23, 2021 at 6:00pm in a virtual platform. You can review the agenda and link to meeting at this

website. <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/government-services/boards-commissions/mayors-youth-council>

Town of Compassion: Update from SR. Members shared they liked the draft nominations form that SR shared over email. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdWWaG-endMO83WLdQ2-DP-NROIQ_Zx210hmUOXGSaVtcHAoQ/viewform After discussion members decided there was not enough information and time to conduct the award successfully this year and agreed to pose to the town that we wait on conducting the award until 2022 when we could be better organized.

Human Rights Declarations: Update from DE and SR. Was able to secure some speakers and will work with the Mayor's Youth Council to secure more speakers. Will make a few more calls to previous partners to fill the last few slots. If we can't meet the remaining slots DE suggested asking teachers at the schools participating.

Commissioner Profiles: DE shared a reminder to submit your profiles to be posted to the Human Rights Commissions website. DE also shared that a written profile or biography is all that would be needed over video.

Facebook Live Meetings: EB shared update and said he has gone through the list of poetical speakers with names and contact info. Said he asked for us to add to edit the list as we see fit. When list is final, he will start to reach out to book speakers.

Let's Meet Folks: KS was out sick today but had emailed her update to DE to share with HRC. DE shared update, KS received an email from West Hartford Civilian Police Review Board (WHCPRB) Committee Chair Olinda Morales shared that she could speak about the very basics of the board since we haven't had any cases yet. Morales suggested that it may be better to wait and shared that they believe some cases are coming to them soon. DE said she believes it would be good to wait until they are moved out of the formation process and posed it to the commissioners. DE moved that we postpone this until the HRC February meeting, EB moved and TM seconded.

School Resource Officer (SRO): DE brought up discussion to identify list of potential speakers educated on the topic to invite and present at a HRC meeting in an effort to gain a better education on the topic for the Commissioners.

SR shared that Rep. Gilcrest is holding an event in West Hartford regarding SRO in schools. Suggested that we all attend if able to. DE, shared she thought it would be a good idea for all commissioners to attend if able to.

AM, shared that in her capacity as a lobbyist that she is working on this event with Rep. Gilcrest as her client in the Connecticut Justice Alliance (CTJA) that is partnering with Rep. Gilcrest on the event. Shared is happy to answer any questions, wanted to disclose that information and happy to share documents on SRO created by the CTJA with commissioners by email.

After discussion HRC decided that attendance of Rep. Gilcrest's meeting is strongly advised. AM will share information from the CTJA with HRC by email before next meeting. Through email commissioners will share suggested speakers and/or subject matter that should be covered by a speaker or representative. There was an understanding that if we could get organized to have speakers in December

that would be great, but we are all willing and able to wait for a later meeting date to give appreciate time to speaker list.

Information for West Hartford State Representative Jillian Gilchrest:

Rep. Gilchrest is co-hosting with the Connecticut Justice Alliance (CTJA) for a Community Vision Session on School Resource Officers.

Wednesday, November 10th 6:30pm-8:00pm at the Elmwood Community Center, 1106 New Britain Ave West Hartford, CT.

Required to RSVP for event

here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScRE1JcKpd2BjgtlWNPiI_LUDdUBNkgKnWFoyngEmxH0wDMTg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Connecticut Human Rights Conference October Event: Update from DE, shared that the Human Rights Commission work was the main topic of conversation. DE said that Waterbury HRC members expressed issue with trying to get in touch with local council members. DE shared how West Hartford HRC invited speakers from government, faith leaders, etc. and process to review complaints which others were very interested in.

<https://portal.ct.gov/CHRO/Human-Rights-Conference/Human-Rights-Conference>

Slavery Reparations: HRC are continuing to gather information for a discussion at a later meeting

Open Discussion: TDE shared that at the last town council meeting there was consideration of a proposed crime petition to be moved to public safety committee. TDE said I am not sure that this is something the commission would follow but it is of interest of me to follow.

TM shared that he as listening to the council meeting as well, I'll call it Mary Fay's crime bill, want to ask how long do we allow for that to sit in committee before we start to say something about it?

DE, I believe it's our responsibility to make sure that Carol Blanks, leader of that committee, is responsible to move swiftly. DE made the motion for TM to be the HRC ambassador to reach out to Carol Blanks for a progress update on the bill, moved by EB and it was seconded by ES.

TDE, wanted to make a comment that there is a dangerous conversation happening in CT about crime that is not really taking into account the overall facts and statics of the world we are in right now. I think deliberative action is something we should take but we need to sure that we are considering all of the data.

AM, made a comment that we have seen a change in patterns amid the pandemic so to put new laws in place to address something that was a result of the pandemic or highly intensified circumstances from the pandemic, which are not normal circumstances, would do greater harm for the longevity of our communities. I appreciate where everyone is coming from and like the idea of following a local crime bill because Ted like you said crime touches upon so many things so thank you TDE for bringing this to our attention.

Announce Next Meeting Date: DE shared that the next meeting date of the HRC will be Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 7:00pm

Adjournment: DE made motion to adjourn, moved by TM and EB seconded.