

**WEST HARTFORD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (WHHRC)  
Minutes of the June 1, 2022 Meeting**

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Co-Chair Dawn Ennis.

**Attendance:**

Esam Boraey, Co-Chair (EB): Absent/Excused  
Dawn Ennis, Co-Chair (DE): Present  
Tekisha Dwan Everette (TDE): Absent/Excused  
Ted Mancini (TM): Absent/Excused  
Aurora Melita, Secretary (AM): Absent/Excused  
Pramod Pradhan, Liaison and Facilitator (PP): Present  
Sarah Raskin (SR): Present  
Kristyn Ross-Jacobs (KRJ): Present  
Eric Schoenberg, Treasurer (ES): Present

**Minutes:**

DE welcomed KRJ to the commission and conducted attendance.

DE noted that with three members absent/excused and only three members present, we did not have a quorum and could therefore not vote to accept the minutes of the April 6, 2022 meeting, or vote on any other issues that were to be discussed.

DE volunteered to fill-in as acting secretary and record the minutes of this meeting.

DE announced special guests listed in the May agenda (a meeting that was canceled) who are under consideration for our September meeting:

1. Yukiyo Iida, one of the Founding Members and Parent Leaders of West Hartford Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Groups (EDI), to share information on an AntiDefamation League of CT (ADL CT) webinar they are organizing to support families, educators and community members with age-appropriate resources and tools.
2. Ann Galer, Investigator in the Capitol Region Office of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. West Hartford is located within the Capitol Region's assigned area and would like to share what they do and how we may be able to support each other.
3. Laura Irmischer, new Director of the West Hartford Public Library to introduce herself and meet WHHRC Commissioners.

DE announced we still have one vacancy on the commission and explained the rules of appointment and that co-chair Esam Boraey plan to request a meeting with WH Mayor Shari Cantor on the process by which appointees are selected, which previously included a review with the co-chair(s) prior to the appointment.

SR discussed the rules for nominations for the Town Honor Roll.

DE noted her objection to the exclusion of public school teachers. ES asked for clarification on why public school teachers are forbidden from consideration. SR explained that teachers are under consideration for other recognition and this is aimed at recognizing non-employees of the town who are unsung heroes. Upon review, ES and DE noted their approval of this rule.

DE detailed West Hartford Pride Cmte. plans to celebrate Pride Month throughout June.

DE explained how it came to be that there is more than one version of the Pride Flag, and why a new, more inclusive flag has been adopted this year to fly over Unity Green.

SR presented the commission with a report on her work in terms of Facebook Live, and DE noted ES plan to meet in early September to discuss further plans for Facebook Live and will report on those plans at our next commission meeting.

ES noted his law firm is the corporate sponsor for the Juneteenth celebration.

ES, SR, DE and KRJ discussed commissioner staffing Pride and Juneteenth events at tables to invite support for the commission, spread awareness of our work and invite a prospective new member.

ES paid tribute to KRJ's commitment to human rights and congratulated her on her appointment.

DE asked SR and ES for an update on our letter asking the Town Council to adopt the IHRA definition, and ES deferred to SR to follow-up as to the delay in a response from the council.

DE reported on the WHHRC's participation in the Memorial Day Parade, which was staffed by SR, KRJ and DE, and KRJ made additional comments about the positive experience for her and her family.

DE noted the date of this meeting, June 1, is LGBT Family Day.

DE noted that participants in the Memorial Day Parade asked for the commission to continue to make meetings available via WHCI and promised to put that motion before the committee for a second time at the September meeting. SR noted that those interested can attend in-person meetings.

SR noted that June 2 is Wear Orange Day in honor of shooting victim Hadiya Pendleton of Chicago.

DE offered a personal reflection about what happens if one wears orange to The Home Depot.

SR requested commissioners' help with staffing a table at West Hartford Pride, KRJ volunteered.

SR noted the commissioners have agreed to write a social media post or do a Facebook Live for upcoming local, state and national holiday observances. KRJ agreed to meet with SR to sign up for her share and SR shared the list in the WebEx chat.

DE agreed to keep her commitment to write a post about Pride, ES is to do one for Juneteenth, TM is handling Independence Day and SR has volunteered to do one for Labor Day. DE saluted TM for a comprehensive post about Memorial Day.

SR asked for the commission's support to partner with Noah Webster House to celebrate Indigenous People's Day.

SR noted December 10 will be our annual commemoration of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and explained the history of our celebration. KRJ volunteered to assist SR in its planning and SR asked KRJ to take charge of the event with her guidance.

SR requested treasurer ES contact the new Town Manager to request funding for the WHHRC. At present, our budget is \$0. ES asked for guidance based on prior commissioner Barry Walters' previous requests for funding, and SR agreed to consult with ES about this.

DE suggested that the following topics for discussion from the April agenda that have not yet been discussed be tabled for the September meeting:

1. Reparations
2. SROs — DE noted State Sen. Derek Slap and Rep. Jillian Gilchrest were in favor of legislation to remove SROs from public schools. ES agreed and there were no other objections..

DE suggested other discussions on holding joint meetings with the Affordable Housing Committee and with other boards and commissions be considered at our September meeting.

SR suggested we add the Civilian Police Review Board to that list of potential meetings to discuss at our September meeting. SR noted that with former WHHRC Co-Chair Adrienne "Ace" Billings-Smith now serving on the Town Council, she is no longer a member of the board, which currently consists of:

- Chair Olinda Morales
- Vice Chair Bjorn Burke
- Secretary Robin Kallor

- Board Members:

- Veronica Badiola
- Nabin Chettri
- Matthew Horowitz

- Alternates:

- Kathleen Costello Hindman
- Matthew Lampkin
- Dennis Swanton
- and one vacancy

DE invited commissioners to make any announcements before adjourning.

ES invited KRJ to offer her thoughts as the newest commissioner.

KRJ stated: "I just want to say thank you to all of you for welcoming me. I think now more than ever, it is critical that we are inclusive, welcoming, accepting, empathetic, and aware of our surroundings and our community and the world at large. And I think that this is the perfect place for us to be able to have that voice be heard. I'm so proud to be part of this."

DE provided an update following a phone conversation with Co-Chair ES about his travel plans and pledge to return in time for the September meeting.

DE sent well wishes to the absent/excused commissioners and noted the WHHRC traditionally does not hold regular meetings in the months of July or August.

DE announced next meeting date of Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022 at 7:00pm at Elmwood Community Center, Room #24, 1106 New Britain Ave, West Hartford, CT 06110.

DE concluded the June 1 meeting at 8:01 p.m.