

Meeting Minutes

Human Rights Commission of WeHa

—
Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs,
Secretary (Interim)
Appointed: March 1, 2023

1 MARCH 2023

MINUTES OF THE WEST HARTFORD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING OF March 1, 2023

7 P.M. ELMWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER, ROOM 24

Attendance:

Co-chairs Esam Boraey and Dawn Ennis, Commissioner Ted Mancini, Facilitator Pramod Pradhan, Treasurer Eric Schoenberg, Commissioner (now Secretary) Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs, our two new commissioners - Mark Linabury and Cara Paiuk were present.

Secretary Aurora Melita and our newly appointed commissioner, Winnie (sp.?) were in absentia and excused for a professional commitment.

Minutes of the last meeting, submitted and written by Dawn Ennis for February were accepted with no amendments. Motion: Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs, Seconded: Dawn Ennis - all were in favor.

Esam and Dawn made formal introductions of the committee members for the benefit of our new commissioners present for their first meeting: Mark Linabury (D) and Cara Paiuk (D).

Cara Paiuk, Democrat, (she/her), originally from the West Coast of Canada, is a headshot photographer with professional studios in West Hartford and Greenwich, CT. She lives with her family in West Hartford and has three children: two twin girls (students at Aiken) and a son who attends King Phillip. She is a corporate alumna, who is passionate about advocacy and would like to use her appointment to affect change where possible. She lived for many years on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and considers herself a "New Yorker at heart".

Mark Linsbury, Democrat, (he/him), is retired after more than 30 years as a state of CT agent. He served as a bureau chief, transitional director, and most recently, heading the school choice program (ex. RSCO) for the Department of Education. He accepted his appointment in an effort to give back to his community. He has a unique background, having been born in Saudi Arabia and has traveled extensively. He lives in West Hartford and has twins who are 28 years old.

Esam made welcoming remarks to the committee and began to discuss this month's agenda.

Social Media referendum/discussion: Hope to vote on implementing social media policy. In the interim, we will still keep the adoption of the social media sub-committee (Ted Mancini and Aurora Melita). Motion for approval of the continuation of the sub committee: Dawn Ennis, Seconded: Eric Schoenburg - all were in favor. List of scheduled social media posts may be provided in future.

Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs volunteered to take minutes. It was also noted by Dawn Ennis that Secretary Aurora Melita requests to be relieved of her secretarial duties and step down as such. Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs volunteered to accept that responsibility. Esam officially nominated Kristyn, Esam Boraey made a motion and Eric Schoenberg seconded the motion - all were in favor.

Eric Schoenberg revisited his experience regarding the resolution condemning the recent worldwide increase in anti-Semitic violence and harassment. Over a year ago, Eric began articulating what a statement of this nature should say. Our mayor, Shari Cantor, recently released a statement that the committee felt disregarded the proposal and draft provided. "Eric Schoenberg had sent a report regarding the adoption of a Definition of Anti-Semitism proposed to the Town Council via Mayor Shari Cantor." (Ennis, Feb. meeting minutes) Eric reminded the committee that the reason for the delay from the mayor's office was that S. Cantor was hoping to field inquiries from three prominent community advocacy groups: the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Relations Council. The mayor was looking to them for recommendations which Eric felt missed the sense of urgency that his draft statement made. The mayor's resolution was not aligned with the definition adopted by other cities and towns across the country and he requests a formal inquiry as to why such drastic changes were made and stated the Mayor's resolution of February 28th, 2023 had "nothing to do with the original recommendation." Eric recommends reaching out to Mayor Cantor to inquire on what happened. Eric Schoenberg made a motion, Seconded by Ted Mancini - all voted unanimously in favor of inquiring why a completely redacted version of the resolution was announced.

Agenda Items for March 2023:

The murder of Tyre Nichols in Memphis was revisited and we briefly discussed the social media post that was posted following the February meeting.

Vacancies: we have appointed three new commissioners and therefore have no vacancies at this time.

Open Discussion"

Continued from February meeting minutes: Ted Mancini reminded the commission that many conservatives, Republicans and Independents believe they can't join or even engage with the WHHRC because they feel they cannot talk to the members of the commission, because they're worried they won't be heard for political reasons. Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs proposed inviting guests to be included in open discussion, open the floor for Holocaust discussions, field community interest, etc. It was also proposed that we would host an open event (with snacks), to discuss in a non-partisan manner any items of interest. "How can we make our commission more present in the community?" The answer is community outreach. Cara proposed we advertise a social event on the Friends and

Neighbors of West Hartford Facebook group. Kristyn reminded that not all community members have technology access and so we would use the library and city hall to advertise in analog. Possible events include a Spring Picnic, surveying the community through both digital and physical suggestion box - "What human rights issues are important to you?" A Google form or other similar format would produce data metrics for us. Esam Boraey suggested we form a subcommittee for this initiative and Mark, Dawn, and Kristyn volunteered. Motion to create the subcommittee: Cara Paiuk, Seconded: Mark Linabury - all voted in favor.

Pramod Pradhan talked about the immigrant teen club run by Kari Kemp through the library. The club is thriving and is open to teens who are West Hartford residents who have been in the USA for less than five years. Students represent such countries as China, Nepal, etc. and attend both Conard and Hall. He suggested the WHHRC invite them to speak to the commission at our next meeting April 5th as our guests. Motion: Dawn, Seconded: Kristyn - all voted in favor.

Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs discussed possibly forming a WHHRC Youth Council, much like the Mayor's Youth Council. The suggestion would be that there would be a representative from each school (inclusive of our home schooled population). The commission decided to invite student representatives to the next meeting with the Immigrant Teen group.

Open Discussion:

Esam Boraey announced that he was selected as the "Immigrant of the Year" by the CTCRC and that on April 27th, 2023, he would be honored by the governor at the Capital Building. Congratulations to Esam!

Ted was delegated as the representative of the social media subcommittee to make a post acknowledging that March is National Women's Month.

Several important events were discussed in open forum: MLK Day, Spring Picnic (April), Pride Month events (Flag raising - June 1st, Festival - June 25th), Juneteeth (June 19th), Park Road Parade (October), Human Rights Declaration event (December).

This year the events for the Pride festival will be moved to the more secure and larger area in the parking lots behind city hall. The event has outgrown Blue Back Square.

Motion to adjourn: Dawn, seconded: Mark - All were in favor.

Next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5th, in Room 24 of the Elmwood Community Center and it is solely an in-person meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

