Meeting Minutes
West Hartford Human Rights Commission
Wednesday, May 3rd, 2023 7pm
Elmwood Community Center

Meeting called to order: 7:11pm

Esam called meeting to order at 7:11pm and recited Human Rights Commission mission statement.

Esam then recorded attendance -
Commissioners present: Esam Boraey, Winnie Tantrapora, Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs, Aurora Melita, Ted Mancini, Cara Paiuk, Eric Schoenberg, Mark Linabury
Commissioners not present: Facilitator Pramod Pradhan, Co-Chair Dawn Ennis
Guests present: Angela Mancini (Ted's daughter)

Esam welcomed new commissioner - Winnie Tantrapora. Mr. Tantrapora described his desire to be on the commission to give back to a community that he is a proud member of. Mr. Tantrapora shared that he is a coach and mentor of West Hartford Youth Baseball and a proud first generation American. He shared his work in the digital health field and his interests assisting families in their fertility journeys. He is a registered independent. Ted pressed him as to who submitted his name to the committee. Mr. Tantrapora responded that the town clerk assisted him in the process. Ted continued to counter his concerns that there was a right and wrong way to be appointed and that was not the right way.

Esam then encouraged everyone to go around and make individual introductions: Cara, Kristyn, Ted, Eric, Mark, Aurora, and Esam all introduced themselves formally.

Approval of March minutes: First - Cara, Seconded - Ted, All in favor - unanimous.

Congratulations to Esam Boraey who was commended as the Immigrant of the Year at the Capitol with ceremony and special proclamation.

Note that the Immigrant Teen Club will join us next month as our special guests.

Aurora Melita discussed her considerations of inviting and soliciting experts on special topics such as slavery to present to the WHHRC, however, considering the open, candid nature of the commissioners' dialogue, discussion of such should be help at a special event or forum and the commissioners felt they were not ready yet. They felt there was foundational work and research to do to appropriately prepare for such an event as well as devote time to onboard new representatives. Ted Mancini reminded the commission this should be done in a manner in which the commission focuses on local or state issues primarily and then be open to a broader dialogue. The commission agreed and the motion was made first by Aurora Melita and seconded by Esam.

Ted Mancini brought the following matter to the commission's attention, that many Republicans and Independents view the Human Rights Commission as a vehicle for the "liberal agenda" and that is why no one else from the Republican Party has come forth to sit on the commission. He further proposed a panel conversation to discuss relevant topics without censorship of any kind. The dialogue continued to discuss equity among underrepresented and disenfranchised

populations, which generally and historically do not include white cis/hetero males, as Mr. Mancini felt that the white male voice was consistently unfairly and underrepresented by the WHHRC. The commission reminded Mr. Mancini that the commission aims to serve underserved populations and serve as a conduit for ALL voices in the community, especially those who often do not have the same equitable resources to have a more powerful "voice".

- A subcommittee was formed to create an event with an agenda to make more groups visible (Ted, Dawn, Mark and Kristyn) to create a Human Rights Town Hall style event.

Cara asked that a committee contact sheet be produced (beyond the group forum email list).

Social media posts have been up to date and deemed appropriate thus far.

Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs delivered a report on behalf of Dawn Ennis on the West Hartford Pride celebratory events for the month of June. A table at the Pride celebration on June 24th will be set up with a rotating schedule of volunteers from the WHHRC, as well as attendance at the flag raising on June 1st. Esam asked for a sign up of volunteers and a schedule for members to populate the table in pairs to greet celebration attendees.

Memorial Day Parade is May 29th, all are encouraged to attend and bring friends and families and join co-chair Dawn Ennis in marching with the WHHRC Banner.

Aurora Melita reported to the commission on the food pantry updates: during the holidays, the pantry informed her that many people are very charitable, but they do need help during the summer months when food insecurity is heightened, especially for families that rely on school food programs. She is interested in an annual support event in partnership with the Gastro Park, commencing in early June to help the pantry stock up for summer. The WHHRC believes that access to healthy food is a human right and therefore in the interest of the commission to help aid the food pantry. A motion was made by Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs and seconded by Aurora, with a unanimous vote in favor by the committee. A subcommittee was proposed of Aurora, Cara, Eric, and Esam - Motion proposed by Kristyn and seconded by Ted Mancini.

Open items of discussion: Ted Mancini reminded the committee of Kristyn's previous proposal to have student representatives from the high school community and his daughter, Angela, a sophomore at Conard, present at the meeting, volunteered. The committee seeks volunteer representatives from each high school in West Hartford, inclusive of any home school student interested. Angela will spearhead a youth subcommittee.

Ted moved that the meeting should be adjourned, Cara seconded.
Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

The next meeting of the West Hartford Human Rights Commission will take place on June 7th, 2023 at 7pm in Room 24 of the Elmwood Community Center.