



Human Relations Commission Meeting Agenda

May 24, 2021 7:00 PM

Zoom Virtual Meeting

West Orange NJ 07052

*Building Our Awareness. Engaging Our Community. Creating Change for Greater Inclusion.
West Orange Township Human Relations Commission*

This is to inform the general public that this meeting is being held in compliance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975. The annual notice was emailed to the Star Ledger and the West Orange Chronicle and filed in the Township Clerk's office on November 17, 2020.

1. Call to order 7:04 PM

HRC Attendance 2021

Dr. David E. Jones, Chair; Commissioners Shannon Gattens, Reji George, Asmeret Ghebremicael, Patrecia West, Elizabeth Milhim, Marguerite Foster, Shakira Adams, Dawn Adams, Dr. Joyce Harley, Dagmar Hobson, Rabbi Robert Tobin

Guests: Caroline Harris, Maria Vera, Erik Lemons, Daniel Felix, Lawrence Weintraub, Lisa Batchelder

Township Council Members- Tammy Williams

2. Commissioners Check-In: "Rose and Thorn" sharing to build trust across Commissioners

- Pat: Attended a live jazz show (rose); Knicks loss (thorn)
- Rob: HRC part of personal growth outside work (rose); thorns grow from roses and let G-d step in
- Dawn: Son graduating in June (rose); roses are always blossoming
- David: Attended best friend's wedding (thorn); oversubscribed (thorn)
- Joyce: Honored by Coalition of 100 Black Women as Woman of the Year (rose); lost her Uncle (thorn)
- Caroline: AAPI proclamation signing (rose)
- Reji: Attended cousin's wedding (rose); waiting for State approval for in-person support (thorn)
- Shakira: Looking forward to spending time with friends and family (rose); no in-person celebrations in higher ed (thorn)
- Shannon: Kids' birthdays coming up (rose); HRC meeting got hacked (thorn)
- Elizabeth: Visited sister and celebrated in Prospect Park

3. Acceptance of minutes of the last regular meeting of the Commission

David and Shannon motions, Joyce seconds. Motion passes.

4. Report - Chairperson Update

- General Updates & Acknowledgements
 - David acknowledged hard work by Commissioners and Volunteers
 - Productive late Winter/Spring, despite challenges of pandemic
 - Pandemic recovery period could take months/years and biggest impact is within Black/Brown communities

- Pat urged to be to be conscious of that when choosing to wear masks or not, since communities of color may not have had the fortune or chosen to be vaccinated yet
- Be vigilant when traveling during the summer months
- HRC has an agenda, but other issues will arise; ex. violence and acts of hatred
- Need to be mindful of how HRC prioritizes, while still having bandwidth to be effective
- Joint HRAC Meeting
 - Meeting in July TBD
- Subcommittee Reporting Process
 - Giving reports every month can be time consuming
 - Recommendation:
 - Prioritize reports and create template
 - Chairs of subcommittees produce a report as an appendix to meeting minutes
 - If pressing, items would be included in agenda
 - No pressure to report out every month
 - Joyce motions: submit written report for minutes or agenda
 - David seconds: agenda appendix makes more sense

5. Old business

- Community Award – Dawn, Joyce, Shakira
 - Outstanding event honoring the late Coach Joe Suriano
 - Presentation by David, joined by Asmeret and Marguerite
 - Also attended by Mayor Parisi, Council Members Williams and Casalino
 - Dawn chose a beautiful award; Dagmar and Marguerite shared personal experiences
 - Bruce Berry and the Suriano family thanked the HRC
 - Dawn – Start thinking about future recipients
 - David – Award should be annual or 2x per year; keep MLK and Community awards distinct
 - Commissioners to submit name and paragraph supporting rationale for nominee; subcommittee to get review submissions
 - Vote on cost of award: \$175; Joyce moves to reimburse Dawn, Shannon seconds
 - Budget update: \$3,515.82 (not incl. \$175); MLK event is the largest of the year
- AAPI Proclamation in partnership with United Asian Voices of WO – David and Caroline
 - May 24th, 2021, presentation and signing of the AAPI Proclamation
 - HRC partnership with newly formed WO heritage group, United Asian Voices of WO (UAV)
 - Proclamation recognized May as AAPI heritage month
 - Mayor read the proclamation and signed it with members of HRC and UAV present
 - Speeches by UAV leadership Fannie Chan-Jarvis and Cecille Pulmano
- Pride – Rob
 - Gia and Leslie from the WO Rainbow Coalition leading event planning
 - Sunday, June 6th at 4pm selected for flag raising, no speeches
 - Caroline coordinating drive-by caravan with PD
 - Rainbow sidewalk chalk challenge to be coordinated on social with HRC
- Juneteenth – Rob, Joyce, David, Liz, Dawn, Tammy, Pat, Dagmar
 - Build on success of Councilwoman Williams’ work
 - Movement to make a national holiday
 - June 19th day-of rundown:

- 10am-12pm – WO Library information table; Joyce confirming prof. from Bloomfield College to speak
- 12pm – Town Hall flag raising and speakers; confirming Congressman Payne, NAACP partnership and speaker, additional speakers and participants such as the WO Youth Caucus
- Afternoon – Colgate Park activities – confirming and securing park permit, tables, partnerships, food trucks, and music
- 4-6pm – Arts Center - Joyce organizing BLM presentation; art projection and reception at gallery with music, art, spoken word and light refreshments
- Commissioners to volunteer to help day-of; Shannon to create sign-up
- Budget to be submitted to David before purchases are made; keep receipts
- Tammy – food trucks need permit and clearance from Health Dept; Shannon to reach out to HD
 - Upcoming district Zoom re Juneteeth
- Pat – celebrated Juneteenth growing up in TX; suggest speakers from TX
- Liz/Dawn – create program

6. New business

- Diversity Enrichment program at Renna House
 - House for Seniors looking for diversity workshops
 - Inform Seniors on community and DEI framework in WO
 - Offer future workshop(s)
 - Meeting on 5/25
- August Small Business Block Party
 - Discussion tabled until June meeting
- HRC Summer Social
 - New Commissioners and appointments; come together this Summer in a park
 - Shannon offered to host sometime in July
- HRC Tabling at Farmer’s Market
 - Coordinate with Farmer’s Market leadership Stacy and Bob Reese
 - Connect with residents at market
 - Shannon to set up sign-up for Commissioners and volunteers to rotate Saturdays

7. Other/Public Comment

- Councilwoman Williams
 - Week of June 10th and Juneteenth
 - 6/15 6-8pm at Rock Spring Golf Club
 - Opportunity to bring Black businesses together and share best practices on how to set up a business in WO
- Lisa Batchelder volunteered to help with various activities
- Caroline appointed co-chair of St. Cloud Elementary’s Diversity Council
- Asmeret earned Master’s Degree
- Pat – HRC to commemorate 1 year since George Floyd’s murder on FB; David to post

8. Adjournment

Joyce motions to adjourn the meeting at 8:41, Shannon seconds. Motion passes.

9. Future Meeting Dates: June 28, July 26, August 23

~ Fostering good will, cooperation and conciliation among groups in the Community ~