



Human Relations Commission
Special Meeting Notes
January 13, 2021 7:00 PM
Zoom Virtual Meeting
West Orange NJ 07052

1. Call to order 7:00 (Shannon Gattens)

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(d), a special meeting has been called for the Human Relations Commission to discuss possible ordinance and by law updates based on community task force findings.

Attendees:

Shannon Gattens, Pat West, David Jones, Liz Milhim, Marguerite Foster, Dawn Adams, Joyce Harley, Shakira Adams

Guests: Councilwoman Cindy Matute-Brown, Councilman Bill Rutherford, Irene Donnelly, Sandra Mordeci

2. Introductions

Commissioners introduced themselves.

New Commissioners include:

- Marguerite Foster
- Dawn Adam
- Joyce Harley
- Shakira Adams

3. Review Task Force Action Plan

- Review each of the action plan slides- individual, community and institution levels.
- Updated the document to include changing the word “reward” to “award” when talking about township contracts.
- Cindy said there is a process in place for vendor training.
- Pat asked Cindy if she has any idea at this point about the percentage of the biz, though the contracts and vendors that might be considered, “minority”
- Joyce mentioned that we not look only at racial issues but sexual harassment issues, as raised with the people in the community she spoke with.



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4. Ordinance and By Law Review

- Overview of where the original Ordinance changes are (with the Council Attorney for review). Note: these are the requested changes submitted in the summer-presented to the HRC members- that request that the Commissioners vote to appoint the Chair among the sitting Commissioners rather than having the Mayor appoint.
- Sandra wants to ensure that the action plan is kept in mind when the Ordinance and By Laws are updated. She also mentioned the previous discussion on perhaps becoming a 501c3, like SOMA. There are challenges with this, however.
- Discussion on how to bring the purpose of the Ordinance and ByLaws in line to support the action plan. Specifically, the need to update language and ensure the structure supports the work of the HRC.
- Shannon suggested putting a document together of the purposes that the Commissioners could review and update. No objections.
- Joyce showed concern over the rushed process and was hoping for more time. She also feels that comments about the Chair being picked by the mayor does not indicate that the Chair will need to do as the Mayor says.
- Shannon explained that the process began in the summer and the process has not been rushed. It would just be more in alignment for us to update the Purpose so that it could better support the work inthe Action Plan. Cindy also explained that most of the changes were submitted earlier, hence they are with legal.
- Shannon asked if anyone would be interested in a committee to work on the final wordsmithing of the purpose for submission to the Township Council on 1/8. David, Pat and Joyce volunteered. A meeting will be set up for 1/17 to finalize.

7. Adjournment 8:21

Prepared by Shannon Gattens