



**Human Relations Commission
Meeting Notes
January 24, 2022, 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 filed in the Township Clerk's office on November 17, 2020 and published in the West Orange Chronicle on December 10, 2020.

1. Call to order at 7:21pm

[HRC Attendance 2022](#)

Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones, Commissioner Shakira Adams, Commissioner Reji George, Commissioner Asmeret Ghebremicael, Commissioner Patrecia West, Commissioner Joyce Harley, Commissioner Dawn Adams, Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin, Commissioner Dagmar Hobson

Councilwoman Tammy Williams

Volunteers Peter Kolbe, Daniel Felix, Natacha Clesca, Carl Brister, Secretary Caroline Harris

2. Commissioners Check-In - "Rose and Thorn of the Month"

- Commissioners shared their roses and thorns of the month

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

- Commissioner Joyce Harley motions, Commissioner Asmeret Ghebremicael seconds, all in favor

3a. Acceptance and (*if necessary - discussion*) of Subcommittee Reports

- Subcommittee reports

4. Report - Chairperson Update

- Acknowledgements: MLK Program and Committee
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones thanked everyone that contributed and organized the virtual event
 - Video came out beautifully and received positive feedback by and large
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones scheduled to meet with President Dr. Evans to follow-up on the event
 - Big thanks to Liz for working with her church to facilitate the recording
 - 2023 Thoughts:
 - Engage a wider group of people from the town to get involved in the planning
 - Potentially tap into groups with resources to lend to the event to scale it larger
- 2022 HRC Goal Setting
 - Continue to acknowledge heritage months, flag raising, Summer programming, and partnership with Volunteer Carl Brister Brister

- Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones would like input from Commissioners on what goals they would like the HRC to accomplish this year; Commissioners to send an email to Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones with 2-3 goals by February 7th
- Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones and Commissioner Shannon Gattens to aggregate into a list of 3-5 goals for the year to recommend back to the Commission

5. Old business

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Township Program
 - 1K video views
 - Commissioners shared feedback on the 2022 event and ideas for 2023:
 - Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin: Production was professionally done and impactful; question to Commissioners on whether to repeat a virtual event since it was so well executed, or try to have an in-person event if conditions allow for it
 - Commissioner Joyce Harley: People were glad it virtual because more people could join and there were no COVID concerns; include West Orange Women's Club next year
 - Commissioner Patrecia West: Consider involving the MLK Commission in planning; hybrid virtual/in-person event in the future; engage with Youth organizations
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones: Create an incentive for people to join in person; shout out to Commissioner Dawn Adams for coordinating the physical awards
- Kwanzaa Recognition Programs/Events
 - Commissioner Joyce Harley:
 - Excellent event in partnership with Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones Cubie of the West Orange Public Library
 - Display was very well received; Whoopie Goldberg brought her grandchildren to see the display
 - Two local students from Kenya came to the display and offered help pronouncing terms
 - Public feedback was overwhelmingly positive; people were pleased to see an inclusive and elevated Kwanzaa celebration
 - More collaboration with different town groups next year to make it even bigger
 - Thanked Councilwoman Tammy Williams and Dr. Khalfani for their support
- Love and Unity/Inclusion "Challenge"
 - Commissioner Patrecia West: Invited Volunteer Carl Brister to the Public Relations Commission to speak about the upcoming Town Hall on small businesses; PR Commission suggested some businesses to participate on the panel
 - Reach out to Supreme Bakery; tape interviews with owner and staff
 - Secretary Caroline Harris provided an update on the "challenge" and asked for volunteers; Commissioner Dagmar Hobson, Commissioner Asmeret Ghebremicael, and Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones volunteered
 - Challenge would culminate during Love + Unity month in May
 - Need ideas and resources from Commissioners
- Logo contest
 - Two submissions so far. How can the contest be reignited?
 - Commissioner Joyce Harley reached out to the WO Arts Council for help, and they had questions:
 - Is there a financial award? Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones does not believe this could be included in the HRC budget; the honor would be having the logo be included on all the HRC collateral
 - Could the Council judge the submissions? Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones and Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim to be put in touch so he can suggest they look at the two submissions
 - Could the logo art be sellable in the Council's gallery? The Council received a commission from anything sold in the gallery.

6. New business

- Love+Unity Town Hall on Small Businesses - February 23rd, 7:30pm-9pm, Virtual
 - Continue to create virtual spaces for community to come together around important topics
 - Commissioner Patrecia West and Secretary Caroline Harris working with Volunteer Carl Brister to help organize
 - Volunteer Carl Brister:
 - Will recognize businesses known to embody Love+Unity values of diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - Dunkin Donuts (Northfield) and Supreme Bakery
 - Corporate VP of Panera
 - Megan Brill of the Downtown Alliances
 - Panel will share best practices to foster inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment; will also share challenges
 - Confirming invited guests and sending final invitations; solidifying final program
 - Focus on Black businesses
 - Begin to promote and advertise the event
 - Volunteer Carl Brister and Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin to connect about a faith-based panel
- Cultural and Religious Month/Days Social Media Acknowledgements
 - Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim shared a running calendar of social media posts to acknowledge cultural and religious months/days
 - Posts have been rolling out
 - Lunar New Year event coming up; Secretary Caroline Harris to provide details
 - February Black History Month planning underway
 - Commissioner Patrecia West: Smithsonian releasing program “1000 Years of Slavery” starts on February 7th; suggested posting links
- HRC Instagram Page
 - Councilwoman Tammy Williams: Instagram previously proposed but lacked resource to maintain and monitor it; autoposts on Facebook and Instagram simultaneously
 - Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin: Do posts need to be archived as public record?
 - Commissioner Asmeret Ghebremicael: Volunteered to maintain the account
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones to speak with Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim to get the account set up
- Facebook Page Posting
 - Several Commissioners helping post to this page

7. Other/Public Comment

Volunteer Daniel Felix: Recently moved to town and would like to meet neighbors; will be listening and learning, and will eventually become more involved. Keen to participate in the “challenge.”

Councilwoman Tammy Williams:

- Commended the HRC on an excellent MLK program; in-person event can attract a large crowd
- Working on small business index compilation
- Sponsoring Black History Month essay and creative competition for Middle and High School students; winner will receive \$100 gift card

8. Executive Session (if necessary)

9. Adjournment at 8:37pm

10. **Future Meeting Dates:** February 28, March 28 – all at 7pm via zoom

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