



Human Relations Commission Meeting Notes

February 28, 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 7:20pm

HRC Attendance 2021

Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones, Commissioners Shannon Gattens, Dawn Adams, Dagmar Hobson, Patrecia West, Elizabeth Milhim, Asmeret Ghebremicael, Rabbi Rob Tobin, and Reji George.

Volunteers Peter Kolbe, Natacha Clesca, and HRC Secretary Caroline Harris

Councilwoman Tammy Williams

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

- Commissioners shared their roses and thorns for the month

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

- Commissioner Shannon Gattens motions, Commissioner Dawn Adams seconds, all in favor of accepting the minutes

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

- Subcommittee reports

4. Report - Chairperson Update

- Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones would like the HRC to do more during Black History Month next year
 - o Heavy emphasis on heritage months overall; focus on MLK Jr. day
- Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin agreed with Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones; need more robust Black History Month programming
 - o Propose 19th of every month drop a "this month in Black History" so there is something ongoing
- Commissioner Shannon Gattens thought the Kindness Challenge was going to be part of Black History Month. Commissioner Shannon Gattens used to post on Facebook like what Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin suggested, but someone needs to take ownership.
- Commissioner Patrecia West asked if anyone attended the WOAHO Black History Month event which coincided with the Love+Unity Event.
 - o Working with other groups in town would solve the problem of overlapping events and resourcing.
 - o Commissioners could make more of an effort to connect with groups in town, attend meetings.
 - o Commissioner Shannon Gattens suggested inviting WOAHO to the March meeting.
- Councilwoman Tammy Williams suggested more coordination with other groups in town.

- Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones suggested tying Black History with Women’s History Month.
- Commissioner Dagmar Hobson has been trying to coordinate with WOAHO but they plan about four months ahead; need to reach out earlier.

5. Old business

- 2022 Goal Setting
 - Commissioners to submit goals for the year.
- Love+Unity Town Hall on Small Businesses - February 23rd
 - Commissioner Asmeret Ghebremicael represented the HRC as a moderator for the panel town hall.
 - Commissioner Asmeret Ghebremicael said the event went well; Councilwoman Tammy Williams was on the Zoom as well; appreciated being asked to co-moderate
 - Councilwoman Tammy Williams felt that it was very enlightening and interesting to hear different perspectives to create more Love+Unity in West Orange. Not as well publicized or attended, but still an excellent discussion.
- Love and Unity/Inclusion “Challenge”
 - Caroline provided an overview.
 - Commissioner Patrecia West suggested “One Community, Many Voices” as an alternative.
 - Need an HRC person to act as a point-person to work with the various WO groups.
 - Commissioner Shannon Gattens recommended we clearly delegate and that there is clear accountability and responsibility.
- Logo contest
 - Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim working with Joyce to get a meeting on the calendar with the Arts Council.
 - Push the contest out to the community, Council’s artists, and work with them to pull together a panel of judges.
- Cultural and Religious Month/Days Social Media Acknowledgements
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones gave a shout out to Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim and Commissioner Asmeret Ghebremicael for the increase in social media posts and presence.
 - Posts have been going out daily, sometimes multiple times a day; acknowledgements of holidays and events celebrated by the community.
- Instagram/FB pages
 - Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim launched the Instagram page last month. 96 followers so far.
 - Growing in reach year over year.
 - Love+Unity post was the most viewed post so far this year.
 - Goals: Increase “Stories,” spotlighting people in the community, more posts to promote events happening in the community; spotlight HRC through answering 3 fun-fact questions so community can get to know the commission.
 - Scheduled 10 posts in March.
 - Create a calendar of significant days throughout the month for “this day in history” to celebrate unsung heroes.
 - Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim encouraged commissioners to suggest posts such as book recommendations.

6. New business

- St. Patrick’s Day Parade
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones – St. Patrick’s Day Parade coming back to West Orange on March 13th, and HRC has been asked to participate.
 - Commissioner Patrecia West, Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin, Commissioner Asmeret

Ghebremicael, Commissioner Shannon Gattens, Commissioner Dawn Adams volunteered to walk.

- Juneteenth
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones - Councilwoman Tammy Williams organized a Juneteenth township-wide committee meeting to encourage partnering around the holiday.
 - Multi-day experience around Juneteenth with different organizations across the township partaking in the celebration.
 - HRC would be responsible for spearheading the Town Hall flag raising, Saturday the 18th or Sunday the 19th (per Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim's suggestion, Councilwoman Tammy Williams liked the idea) between 10am-12pm; support other events taking place.
 - Other events would be at the library, Rock Spring golf club, and around town.
 - Others from the HRC to join the next committee meeting to discuss Father's Day overlap.
- Women's History Month – Starts tomorrow
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones would like to see HRC engage the community around a program to celebrate the month.
 - Councilwoman Tammy Williams putting together a program with Black female elected officials. Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones offered to help.
- PRIDE Month
 - Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones put Pride month on the radar so HRC can start planning.
- Community Leaders Against Hate and Antisemitism
 - Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin updated the HRC on the event and symposium coming up on March 22nd for community leaders.
 - Breakouts will take place for different leadership segments.
 - Moderated discussions to explore resources leaders need/have to respond to hate incidents.
 - Free program. Keynotes and other speakers will be featured.
 - Invited Commissioners to attend and partake in the breakout sessions.

7. Other/Public Comment

Commissioner Shannon Gattens – Next meeting would like to discuss Spring gathering

Volunteer HRC Secretary Caroline Harris – Discussed partnership with the school district for Lunar New Year event with UAV; asked for AAPI Heritage Month to be added to the agenda for next month.

Volunteer Natacha Clesca – Asked about Haitian flag raising. Suggested featuring Haitian “she-roes” on social media. Natacha to connect with Commissioner Elizabeth Milhim.

8. Executive Session (if necessary)

9. Adjournment at 8:44pm

Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones motions, Commissioner Shannon Gattens seconds, all in favor

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

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