



## Human Relations Commission Meeting Notes

**November 22, 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 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 – 7:05PM

### HRC Attendance 2021

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

Volunteers: Peter Kolbe, Danielle Wallace, Twanisha Siejkowski, Natacha Clesca

Special Guest: Councilwoman Tammy Williams

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

- Roses and Thorns were shared by Commissioners

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

Commissioner Shannon Gattens motions, Commissioner Joyce Harley seconds, all in favor

Commissioner Shannon Gattens motions to do Rose/Thorn before meeting called to order, Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones seconds, all in favor

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

- Subcommittee reports – No reports shared

4. Report - Chairperson Update (Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones)

- Approaching season of giving thanks; expressed gratitude to Commissioners

5. Old business (Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones)

- Veterans Day Township Program
  - Commissioner Dawn Adams, Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin, Commissioner Patrecia West attended WO event
  - HS ROTC was involved
- Love + Unity Town Hall Program
  - Co-hosted with Music Village

- Lively Q&A, necessary conversation
- Township Leaders and Volunteers continue to push agenda of DEI forward; reinforce DEI work and how we engage in the work as a town
- Carl Brister of Music Village working on bi-monthly programming; ex. Interfaith Town Hall
- Community Issues Committee to work with Carl Brister
- Native American/Indigenous Peoples Day Month
  - HRC has not created programming for the month
  - HRC posted acknowledgement of the month on social media
- Indigenous People's Day Proclamation from the Mayor
  - HRC supported Mayor in Proclamation effort
  - Secretary Caroline Harris to meet with local Native American group representative to explore a partnership
  - Commissioner Shakira Adams – Stephanie Jones shared reading families could do together; Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones – St. Cloud leading the way to provide educational materials for families, and initiated a Land Acknowledgement; Chairperson Dr. David E. Jones to post materials
- Follow-Up: In-person/Virtual HRC Meetings
  - Response from majority that Commissioners would prefer to stay virtual because of COVID rates post-holidays and maintain convenience of joining from home
  - HRC to stay virtual until trends change within the state
  - Commissioner Shannon Gattens – Plan a social gathering outdoors under heat lamps over the holidays
- Love and Unity Town Hall Panel and Future Series Initiative
  - Planning more events with Carl Brister (see above)
  - Volunteers and Commissioners should come forward if interested in participating on panels
- Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Diwali
  - Post planned for Hanukkah on Sunday; public menorah lighting on Town Hall steps 11/29 @ 4PM
    - Credit to Volunteer Lisa Batchelder for creating the flyer
  - Posted Diwali acknowledgement
  - Regarding Kwanzaa, WO African Heritage Organization planning their annual event on 12/31
    - Kwanzaa starts 12/26 and ends 1/1
    - Commissioner Joyce Harley and Commissioner Dawn Adams – Proposed HRC partnership with WOPL on a Kwanzaa exhibit, ceremony, and candle lighting on each night; Commissioners deliberated on how to support the proposed event
    - Commissioner Dagmar Hobson and Commissioner Patrecia West – HRC and WOAHO events cannot conflict and should complement each other
    - Commissioner Shannon Gattens – Subcommittee to organize and sign-up genius to recruit volunteers; Commissioner Patrecia West has most materials on-hand

## 6. New business

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Township Program, January 17, 2022 at 10am
  - Commissioners and Volunteers met to discuss MLK program last week
  - Commissioners went through program and voted on speakers and honorees
  - Stipends could be offered to speakers, but modest amounts preferred
    - \$750-\$1500 Recommended – Commissioner Rabbi Rob Tobin motions, Commissioner Joyce Harley seconds, all in favor
  - Educators will be the theme of the event; speakers and honorees will either be educators or have some connection to education
  - Speakers: HRC to vote via Doodle from Secretary Caroline Harris by 11/29 – select top 3

- Honorees: HRC to submit nominations via form from Commissioner Shannon Gattens; HRC to post a solicitation to the community to submit nominations via form; HRC will go through a review process during December; HRC will determine honorees
- Logo Contest (Liz)
  - HRC to post the flyer on social media and select winner by MLK event

7. Other/Public Comment

- Volunteer Twanisha Siejkowski thanked the HRC for their work in the community

8. Executive Session (if necessary)

9. Adjournment at 8:51PM

Commissioner Shannon Gattens motions, Commissioner Joyce Harley seconds, all in favor

10. **Future Meeting Dates:** December 20, January 24

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