

**Town of Hamden
Human Rights and Relations Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday January 13th, 2022
7:00 pm**

To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/mE2cgY3G8ZpXCSBv3uGFMAzGRt8VH-JUoYRM3VzSonjgCSGhOo4j6LzOXPrMCtJ-.IS_nogM24ZigX3Jo

**** If prompted for a password, enter: 1H\$Jhx%m**

*****If you are reviewing a print copy of these minutes and wish to view the meeting recording, please visit the Agenda Center at www.hamden.com/AgendaCenter. Then, review the recording by downloading the digital version of these minutes and following the instructions above.*****

Minutes

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairman Cardwell called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
- 2. Attendance**
 - a. In Attendance:** Sean Cardwell, Chairman; Martha Walker; Michael Thompson; Rabbi Herbert Brockman; Judy Goldberg; Weruche George
 - b. Absent:** Ganiyu Mimiko
 - c. Also In Attendance:** Mayor Lauren Garrett; Courtney Winch, CTHRO; Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk
- 3. Approval of Past Minutes:** December 9th, 2021
 - a. Rabbi Brockman made a motion to approve the December 9th, 2021 minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Goldberg. All were in favor.
- 4. Correspondence- N/A**
- 5. Guest Speakers**
 - a. Mayor Lauren Garrett
 - i. Chairman Cardwell welcomed and introduced Mayor Garrett. She explained that her goal is to form a diverse and more inclusive municipal workforce and environment. She highlighted her recent appointment of a Fire commissioner, who has experience in specifically hiring Black and Brown firefighters. She hopes to redesign the Keefe Center, so that it can better service every Hamden resident, from newborns to senior citizens.
 - ii. Q&A with Commissioners
 1. Rabbi Brockman asked how the HRRC can best accomplish her goal of inclusivity and diversity and what role she envisions for the HRRC moving forward.
 - a. Mayor Garrett suggested the HRRC assess the Hamden municipal workforce, see if it is truly reflective of the Town. She emphasized the importance of having diversity- whether it be through gender, race, and/or voting district. She welcomed any and all scrutiny and feedback from the commission.

2. Mr. Thompson noted that January is Human Trafficking and Prevention month, and asked if the TOH- schools or organizations- offers any education regarding warning signs or techniques to combat it.
 - a. Mayor Garrett noted that the “We the Village” organization holds “Teen Talks,” which could prove a useful starting point for such a conversation. While she did not believe that the topic of human trafficking is currently being discussed in the schools, she noted that it could be combined with the biweekly “Connections” classes that are being conducted in the high school. Finally, she asked for any referrals of related resources that Mr. Thompson or other commissioners could offer.
3. Chairman Cardwell commented that he would like to have a student representative on the commission and asked for Mayor Garrett’s feedback.
 - a. She clarified that to be an actual member, the student has to be 18 years old, and has to be an elector, aka a voter, of Hamden. However, the ordinance could be amended to include a student commissioner. Ms. Goldberg suggested simply having a work group within the commission that has student representatives from the high school, in which case, age would not pose an issue. She offered to reach out to the high school and start garnering interest amongst potential student representatives. Mayor Garrett suggested the Global Youth Activists club, and Ms. Walker suggested the Black and Hispanic Union.
4. Ms. George asked if there was any resolution to the slave play incident, which took place in early 2020. She asked Mayor Garrett how she plans to handle similar incidents, moving forward.
 - a. Mayor Garrett noted that two groups were established after the play incident: HDAC, or the Hamden Diversity Advisory Council and a town committee called RED, which is made up of various individuals, including mental health experts, as well as the mayor, who sits on the task force. HDAC created a model that laid the groundwork to support Black and Brown educators and students. Anti-racism is a key prong outlined in this model. RED issued a written report outlining specific actions to implement. Ms. George emphasized the importance of having these types of conversations. Mayor Garrett commented that it is important for educators to feel okay making mistakes, as long as every effort is made to not repeat them.

b. Courtney Winch: CT CHRO

- i. Ms. Winch is an ambassador for the CT Commission for Human Rights Opportunities. She clarified that CHRO has jurisdiction to enforce discrimination law and investigate discrimination, and eliminate discrimination through education, advocacy, and outreach. She has been connecting with local HRR commissions, to form connections which will help them achieve their goals. Her primary goal as ambassador, is to increase invisibility of the CHRO and the local commissions and create an opportunity for collaboration. She explained that if the commission is presented with discrimination allegation, it should be

forwarded to her directly, so she can start a file. She encouraged commissioners to follow the CHRO social media accounts, which provide educational materials as well. Chairman Cardwell briefly explained the HRR forum and offered to send some corresponding materials to Ms. Winch. They briefly discussed forming a joint panel in the future.

6. Old Business

a. Update on MLK Mural

- i. There has been no update on the mural. The clerk, Ms. Paglia, will reach out to Ms. Martindale, with the Arts Department, to check on the status of the project and see how the HRRC can lend any help.

b. Monthly Movie Series: Discuss February movie

- i. Ms. Goldberg suggested “Children’s March” for the January movie selection. Commissioners briefly discussed which MLK movie they will run for the February selection. Ms. George expressed that she wishes for more engagement with the movies, and questioned how to attract more viewers. She suggested a partnership with the library, as a possible solution.

c. Mission/ Purpose Discussion: Changes/Implementation

- i. One final update is required on the town website.

7. New Business

a. Community Outreach

- i. Ms. Walker reminded commissioners that the Black History Committee is hosting a virtual event on January 23rd, 2022 via Zoom. The group is encouraging donations, which are presented to graduating students.

b. MLK Day: (Movie, services, events, etc.)

- i. Rabbi Brockman reminded commissioners that the Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Service will be held on Friday, January 14th, 2022 at 7pm via Zoom.

c. Guest Speaker: February guest

- i. Chairman Cardwell suggested Robyn Porter as the February guest speaker. Ms. Porter was instrumental in helping Governor Lamont pass the CROWN Act.

8. Thoughts and Ideas

- a. There was a brief discussion regarding how to bring awareness of human trafficking and prevention in Hamden. Commissioners agreed to reach out to several organizations, in an effort to focus more on the topic at the March meeting.

9. Executive Session (If Required)- N/A

- 10. Adjournment:** At 8:20 pm, Mr. Thompson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. Walker. All were in favor.

Submitted by: Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk