

Minutes
Town of Farmington, CT
Human Relations Commission
Online-Web Conference
May 24, 2021
5:30 pm

Commission Attendees

Jay Tulin
Andrew Arboe
Anne Newbury
Donna Mambrino
Zalman Nakhimovsky
Lisa Pawlik

Town of Farmington

Nancy Parent (Community & Rec Services)
Zack Martin (Police Dept.)

A. Call to Order

Jay Tulin called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

B. Public Comment

None.

C. Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion made by Andrew Arboe and seconded by Zalman Nakhimovsky, the minutes from January 11, 2021 were approved as presented. Unanimously approved.

D. Introductions – New Commissioners

- 1) Christine Mergenthaler and Kay Higgins have stepped down from the Human Relations Commission. Anne Newbury is the newest member of the Commission. She has been a volunteer for Services for the elderly and is very interested in helping seniors and disabled residents advocate for rights and accessibility.

E. Presentations

- 1) Farmington Community Services
 - a. Nancy Parent presented on the services provided by the Department of Community & Recreational Services. The department's mission is to manage resources, provide programming, and coordinate to ensure a healthy community. The department contain seven divisions, grouped into three service categories: supportive services, community enhancements, and recreational programming. The department also provides staff leadership to outside organizations such as the Human Relations Commission, Racial Equality Taskforce, Fair Rent Commission, Juvenile Review Board, Community Chest, Services for the Elderly, and FOCUS (local substance abuse prevention council). Nancy reported on the different programs offered by each of the divisions: Housing, Transportation, Recreation, Westwoods Golf Course, Youth Services, Senior Center, and Social Services.

F. Reports

- 1) Chair Report
 - a. Jay Tulin reiterated that the Commission's goal is to have educational presentations at each meeting to help broaden the scope of the Commission's work.

- b. Jay Tulin reported on Senate bills that have been passed regarding hate crimes, online stalking, and human trafficking. However, bills regarding disability access to state buildings and specialized disability training for doctors did not pass in this round.
 - c. Human Relations Commission Forum – June 24, 2021 – Eleven human relations commissions throughout Connecticut will join in an online forum to discuss current projects and future goals.
 - d. International Human Rights Day – December 10, 2021 – The Commission should begin thinking about nominations for the Human Rights Award for this year. Nancy Parent commented that the theme this year “Recover Better” and focuses on those who excelled in COVID-19 relief efforts. Nancy and Jay suggested considering Jennifer Kertanis, Director of Health for FVHD as a possible nomination.
 - e. Ethics and fair hearing trainings for the Human Rights Commission may be scheduled soon. Nancy Parent is working with town manager on this.
- 2) Department of Community Services
 - a. Director of Community & Recreational Services, Nancy Parent, reported that the department is still working on homebound vaccine appointments with the FVHD and local doctors, as well as housing and financial assistance for residents in need. Town Hall is now open to the public, though the doors are still closed due to safety reasons.
 - 3) Town Council Liaison
 - a. Joe Capodiferro was not present to report.
 - 4) Police Department
 - a. Officer Zack Martin detailed his role as liaison to the Commission. No new business to report.
 - 5) Racial Equality Task Force Update
 - a. Nancy Parent reported that the community conversations have been going very well and the next one is scheduled for June 1, 2021. She shared the progress on the Taskforce’s 11 current goals, including the community conversations, hiring a DEI consultant for staff training, declaring racism as a public health crisis, creating an online resource and presence for the Taskforce, and diversifying the town’s businesses and boards.

G. New Business

- 1) National Disability Voter Registration Week
September 13-17 – Jay suggested the Human Relations Commission be involved with this effort, possibly in collaboration with Citizens Coalition for Equal Access (CC=A). One proposal would be hosting a luncheon at New Horizons with a speaker and volunteers who are able to register voters. Nancy suggested forming a subcommittee/working group to explore this idea. Anne Newbury and Donna Mambrino volunteered to head the working group.

H. Old Business

- 1) Project Updates
 - a. Building Committee Update -
Referendum on high school building project is June 3, 2021. No updates on this.
 - b. Village Center Project Update -
The sidewalk component of this project, which is the main portion involving the input of the Human Relations Commission, is going out to bid soon. No other updates on this.
- 2) Social Media Guidelines Draft -
Jay Tulin is still working on draft of this and will be discussed at a future meeting.
- 3) Needs Assessment Results Evaluation & Next Steps

Jay suggested having a future meeting to focus solely on the results and suggestions of the needs assessment.

- 4) Next meeting dates are proposed as June 28, July 26 (tentative, if necessary), Sept 27, November 22, 2021.

I. Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Donna Mambrino and seconded by Anne Newbury, the meeting was adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Parent, Secretary