

Minutes
Town of Farmington, CT
Human Relations Commission
Hybrid In-Person/Online Web Conference
August 23, 2021
6:30 pm

Commission Attendees

Jay Tulin
Andrew Arboe
Anne Newbury
Donna Mambrino
Zalman Nakhimovsky
Lisa Pawlick
Anne Burhoe
Jun Lu

Town of Farmington

Nancy Parent (Community & Rec Services)
Zach Martin (Farmington Police Department)
Joe Capodiferro (Farmington Town Council)

Guests

Ruth Grobe
Susan Schnitzer
Isabella Suffredini
Anne Burhoe

A. Call to Order

Tulin called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.
A motion was made and seconded (Newbury, Mambrino) to move the Farmington Community Services award winners presentation to the first item on the agenda.
Unanimously approved.

B. Farmington Community Services Awards

Parent presented the Farmington Community Service awards to two students (Bella Suffredini & Merci Adacolla) who excelled in providing service to the community and highlighted each students' contributions to the community.

Presentations: Susan Schnitzer, CEO, Ct. Institute for Refugees and Immigrants

Susan Schnitzer gave a detailed Power Point presentation highlighting the services provided by the institution.

C. Public comment

None.

D. Introduction of new member Jun Lu.

Tulin introduced the new Human Relations Commission member, Jun Lu and gave a brief overview of her background.

E. Approval of Minutes

A motion made and seconded (Mambrino, Newbury) to approve the minutes from June 28, 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved.

F. Reports

- 1) Chair Report
 - a. Tulin spoke on behalf of the Commission at the hearing of the Town Planning & Zoning plan regarding universal design.
 - b. ADL Walk for Hate October 10th, 2021— a team has been formed and would like to see if he can gather people from the Town to join the team. (Pawlick interjected and

requested this be an agenda item and not a chair announcement. Tulin explained that the walk is not a sponsored HRC event, but would like to encourage residents to be a part of it and the appropriate place for this topic is in the chair report).

- c. October 12th meeting in Town Council, Tulin will introduce Myra Clark Seagle who will present to the council about the status of anti-Semitism
 - d. Citizens Coalition for equal access has started meeting again
 - i. Pedestrian Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines discussed.
 - ii. Resolution 3684 - Reaching out to legislators about pedestrian rights of way and accessible medical equipment, and disability training that need to be addressed locally. Need to finalize guidelines and move to mandates.
 - iii. Project Updates
 1. Village Center sidewalk update approved and RFP has gone out to solicit bids to start the project.
 2. Building committee will meet Wednesday night, advocating about Universal Design.
 3. Parent & Tulin participated in Statewide Forum. Next meeting October 28, 2021 and Tulin will serve on the planning committee.
- 2) Department Of Social Services
 - a. Parent updated on Social Services
 - b. COVID Relief areas are beginning again to get third vaccines for eligible residents.
 - c. Dial A Ride services continue, fundraising for an additional minivan.
 - d. With school beginning, new fall programs begin as well (Back-to School etc).
 - e. Affordable Housing Plan – working to have Town Planner as a guest speaker in a future meeting. Pawlick interjected and stated she is not interested in having speakers from the local government.
 - 3) Town Council Liaison
 - a. Joe announced a Town Council meeting will be held in a couple weeks and wished everyone a happy summer.
 - 4) Police Department
 - a. Zach welcomed new member, Jun Lu, and introduced himself with a brief background.
 - 5) Racial Equality Task Force
 - a. Community Conversations are set to begin again in the Fall 2021.
 - b. Upcoming topics will include community engagement where we as a community can make a public statement to move forward with topics.
 - c. Finalized documents for declaring racism as a public health crisis in the Town of Farmington
 - d. Economic Development (Rose Ponte) has been working with taskforce members on the economic impacts and black owned businesses for ways to diversify. In addition she is also working with personnel to hire, retain and train a more diverse staff.
 - e. Pawlick interjected and made a statement that she has issues using the meeting for the purpose of updates.

G. New Business

- 1) A discussion was had on establishing subcommittee regarding the AAPD Candidate Survey. Parent and Tulin asked a volunteer from the Commission to join the subcommittee to review the candidate survey for questions about disabled rights/rules to be included as part of the (already established) candidate forums that pertain to our community before Election Day. No decision was made, Ruth Grobe suggested assigning it to the Citizen's Coalition for Equal Access.
- 2) A discussion was had to establish a subcommittee to determine a rating scale to vet event, activity proposals, celebrations, or awards as discussed in the previous meeting.
 - a. Tulin & Parent requested volunteers from the Commission members that are interested in serving on the subcommittee to assist in developing a rating scale.
 - b. Pawlick made a statement saying she would like to see the Commission more focused on disability issues and less focused on politics. She fears the Commission is getting too political and away from disability concerns. Parent suggested Pawlick work on the subcommittee since that rating system is where the Commission would rate the amount on involvement or recognition it has within the Town.
 - c. Pawlick suggested seeing more of a focus on disability rather than refugee services. She believes the rating system is taking the Committee's focus away from the mission. Parent then reviewed the mission of the HRC which is equality and inclusion, which includes all marginalized populations.
 - d. No decision was made and will be tabled until the next meeting.

H. Old Business

- 1) Needs Assessment review
 - a. Parent reviewed four categories for Task Force goals:
 - 1) Public recognition about the Human Relation Commission
 - a. Would like public to be more aware of the Commission and more visible in the community. A discussion was had on this topic.
 - b. Parent suggested public service announcements, in addition recognizing the Human Rights Day & awards with committee which have already been completed.
 - c. Tulin suggested looking at other towns and how they handle public awareness. As well as promoting HRC in community via Farmington Patch, United Farmington, local Facebook groups etc.
 - d. Interaction with other community groups and organizations – social media (non-political)
 - 2) Education & information
 - a. Meet goal in September about voter registration for disabled voters.
 - b. Mambrino suggested partnering with Beanz & Co. Parent reviewed the start of a plan in 2020 that did not go through because of COVID which involved highlighting businesses

that are inclusive. The Commission agreed this was a great idea and a plan will need to be put in place to partner with them again.

c. Newbury also suggested reaching out to Highland Park Market as a partner.

3) Networking

a. Continue to network with State “other” or “like” committees and look at social media guidelines

4) Grievance procedure

a. Parent suggested training for commissioners on conflict resolution.

2) September Voter Registration subcommittee

a. A discussion was had about how to advertise about voter registration for September 2021 and how to run the event.

i. 2-3 Resident speakers

ii. More presence from HRC

G. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded (Mambrino, Nakhimovsky) to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 pm. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Parent, Secretary