

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

MEETING MINUTES

December 14, 2016

Present: Kevin Washington, Chairman, Pamela Lofton-McGeorge, Patricia Mack, Viola Nahabedian, Len Swade, Diane McDougald, Liaison

Absent: Joyce Armstrong (excused) and Max Kuziak (unexcused)

Agenda Items Discussed:

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Washington at 7:23 p.m.

2. **Public Communication:** None

3. **Approval of Minutes:** October 19, 2016

Motion: Commissioner Mack made a motion to accept the meeting minutes for October 19, 2016. 2nd by Commissioner Swade. Vote: 5-0-0. Motion Passes.

4. **New Business:**

a) **Vice Chair position is currently vacant:**

***Motion:** Commissioner Swade made a motion to add nominations for Vice Chair to the agenda. 2nd by Commissioner Nahabedian. Vote: 5-0-0. Motion Passes.*

b) **Nominations for Vice Chair**

Commissioner Lofton-McGeorge nominated Commissioner Mack for the Vice Chair Position. No other nominations made. Commissioner Mack accepted the nomination.

***Motion:** Commissioner Lofton-McGeorge made a motion that Commissioner Mack assume the position of Vice Chair for HRC. 2nd by Commissioner Swade. Vote: 5-0-0. Motion Passes.*

c) **First Church Muslim Event:**

Chairman Washington stated that the Muslim event held last month was very good and thanked HRC members who could attend. He also indicated that Pastor Yonkman reached out to him to see how Windsor can be considered as a "Town of Compassion." "Town of Compassion" is referred to as town that respects and cares for everyone in the community, able to be resilient and compassionate to handle and resolve crisis with shared & innovative ideas. Therefore, Windsor would be considered a town that recognizes, respects and have compassion about diverse beliefs, religions, gender, ethnicity, age, etc.

Also, Pastor Yonkman is interested in developing more programs with First Church and the Muslim Mosque. Chairman Washington mentioned that Asif Hirani is the new Imam at the White Rock Islamic Center.

Chairman Washington said that there is more research to be done regarding becoming a "Town of Compassion and wanted to know the HRC Commissioners' thoughts about pursuing this a

possibility. Commissioner Swade stated that he feels the HRC should make a proposal for Windsor to be a “Town of Compassion” to the Town Council.

Motion: Commissioner Mack made a motion that the HRC make a proposal for Windsor to be a “Town of Compassion” to the Town Council. 2nd by Commissioner Swade. Vote: 5-0-0. Motion Passes.

d) Community Partnership:

Chairman Washington indicated that he continues to build relationships with businesses and feels we should make it a priority beginning in 2017 to increase the awareness of HRC. One way to further increase visibility of the HRC is to know when special events occurs. Therefore, he has charged newly elected Vice Chair Mack with the responsibility to develop a better calendar for HRC to reference and be aware of special observances throughout the year and/or prevent any oversight and/or conflicts.

e) NY Times Article on Race Relations:

Chairman Washington mentioned that there have been several stories regarding race relations such as articles on Muslims. He will forward the articles to the HRC commissioners and liaison going forward. The NY Times Editors have been discussed interest to Chairman Washington about attending a HRC meeting to do a story on the diversity Windsor has to offer as a town. Chairman Washington would like to continue the dialogue with the NY Times regarding next steps.

f) Human Relations Day – December 10th:

Chairman Washington announced that Human Relations day was observed on December 10th this year. Since we missed observing this day, Chairman Washington plans to submit a request to Helen Albert, Secretary for Town Manager’s Office, to have a proclamation done for Town of Windsor to be recognized for the entire month of December. Also, Chairman Washington has invited the HRC members to attend the next Town Council Meeting on Dec. 19th @ 7pm.

g) Black History Month- February 2017

Chairman Washington asked for any ideas regarding events to do for Black History month. Commissioner Swade indicated that the HRC previously had an event called One Book One Windsor. Chairman Washington suggested that HRC celebrate Black History for the entire month by sponsoring an event for each week in February. The suggested events will be as follows:

- **Feb 3rd or 4th- Reading by an Author:** Chairman Washington will contact the Executive Director of the Black Cultural Center at UConn.
- **Feb 10th or 11th - Movie Night:** Suggested movie to watch is about the Artist Gordon Parks. Liaison McDougald will work with the Library to plan event.
- **Feb 17th or 18th - Windsor Historical Society:** Chairman Washington will work with Historical Society to plan events.
- **Feb 24th or 25th – Soul Food Dinner “Experience food of the Culture.”** Vice Chair Mack will contact Crec, LP Wilson or Windsor Arts Center to find location for event. Ms. White has agreed to bring the WHS Gospel Choir to the event to perform.

Commissioner Swade suggested that in 2018 the Black History Month should include the One Book One Windsor event again. Also, suggested to start planning in November for BHM next year.

Liaison McDougald suggested that HRC contact the Library to see what they have planned and perhaps HRC can participate in their events.

Also, HRC would like to recognize and video each event on WIN-TV. Commissioner Lofton-McGeorge will contact WIN-TV to find out details to video each event.

h) **Reappointment & Resignations:** On November 7th Commissioner Mack was officially named a full member and her terms expires in 2019. Commissioner Swade was reappointed on November 17th. He has serviced on HRC for 25 years.... congratulations!

On November 5th, Richard Knickerbocker resigned from the as Vice Chair for HRC. HRC commissioners would like to express their gratitude to Mr. Knickerbocker for his service on the commission.

There were six candidates that interviewed for the HRC and we are awaiting the selection and approval from the Personnel Committee regarding which candidates will be joining the HRC.

Commissioner Swade suggested that he would like to have a discussion with Jill Jenkins (Personnel Committee) at the next Town Council Meeting to have selected candidates attend and meet with HRC prior to being confirmed.

Motion: Commissioner Mack made a motion the HRC would like to meet any candidates to join the HRC prior to final confirmation. 2nd by Chairman Washington. Vote: 5-0-0. Motion Passes.

5. Committee Reports: None

6. **Liaison Report:** No reporting from Liaison McDougald. Chairman Washington has requested that a financial report be provided at the next meeting.

7. Old Business:

a) **Bridge Builders:** Chairman Washington wanted to get feedback from HRC members to see how they felt the Bridge Builder ceremony was perceived. Commission Swade stated that under the circumstances he felt that the ceremony went well. However, the format and selection of all the categories was too many. Liaison McDougald indicated that everyone should be aware of how the flow of the ceremony is to be done, such as have a rehearsal. All commissioners agreed. Commissioner Lofton-McGeorge suggested that there should be only one winner per category. Chairman Washington has appointed Vice Chair Mack as the chair for the Bridge Builders Awards event. She will work with a team of commissioners to start the planning of this event.

b) **Windsor Peace Festival:** The Windsor Peace Festival will be held April 20th -23rd 2017. The following events are planned:

- **Poetry Reading - Friday, 20th:**
- **Windsor Idol Talent Show: Friday, 21st:** The event will be held at WHS and has been booked and confirmed. Commissioner Mack is the chair for this event and will begin the planning. Ms. White from WHS Choral Program will serve as the head judge for this event.

- **Wellness & Fitness Fair - Saturday, April 22nd:** This event will be held in the Gym at WHS and has been booked and confirmed. Commissioner Lofton-McGeorge will be the chair for this event and will start planning. Possible vendors to consider would be ProHealth and YMCA, Massage Therapist and Acupuncture. Liaison McDougald will follow-up with Risk Management to find out protocol/process to charge vendors for this event.
- **Peace Dinner - Sunday, April 23rd:** HRC will look for other locations to hold the Peace Dinner. Commissioner Lofton-McGeorge will contact Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt and Vito's to obtain menu and pricing information.

8. Items from Commissioners: *Commissioner Swade mentioned that he has contacted the WHS student to see if he is still interested in being the student representative for HRC. However, the student has not responded back to him. Therefore, will seek to find other interested candidates. Commissioner Mack suggested that Commissioner Swade contact Richard Herrera from Ascend to see if he can recommend a student.*

Also, Commissioner Swade discussed the Community Forum with Windsor Police. He indicated that the Police Chief will talk about the traffic study. CCSU students are doing research and will be tracking traffic stops within the state of CT. Their research revealed that there was a bias of stopping African Americans and Windsor did not fair well in the study. Therefore, Windsor Police is interested in correcting this problem. More information to come.

9. Adjournment: Chairperson Washington adjourned the meeting at 9:06 p.m.

Motion: *Commissioner Swade made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Mack. Vote: 5-0-0. Motion Passes.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela Lofton-McGeorge

Pamela Lofton-McGeorge

HRC Secretary