

**TOWN OF WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - NOVEMBER 10, 2021
MINUTES**

HYBRID MEETING VIA ZOOM AND IN-PERSON AT TOWN HALL – LUDLOW ROOM

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Washington called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm
2. **Roll Call/Attendance:** taken by Secretary Copeland. Present in person: Castella Copeland, Leonard Swade, Linda Massa, Jim Burke, Chairman Washington. Present via Zoom: Josh Amaro. Excused absences: Rebecca Jacobsen, Joyce Armstrong and Bryon Bobb. Unexcused Absences Kereme Murrell. Copeland has a tracker via google sheets that is updated each meeting.
3. **Public Communications:**
Burke noted that there is one person present in the waiting room on Zoom named Mathew Miller. Each speaker is limited to sharing for three minutes. Miller shared their feedback on the online events with applause and praise for the format and types of conversations. Chairman Washington thanked Miller for their kind words and encouraged them to attend more events including the upcoming event on Colorism 11/14 at 5 pm via Zoom. Chairman Washington closed the public communications portion at 6:39 pm.
4. **Approval of Minutes: October 2021**
Motion to approve of the minutes of October 13th, 2021 was passed 6 - 0. A motion was made by Swade and seconded by Massa.
5. **Liaison Report/Treasurer Report:**
Burke shared the hard work Sandra Brown has made with large-scale updates following the Critical Race Theory event to the Windsor Human Relations Commission (WHRC) website. Additional details will follow later in the agenda.
6. **New Business:**
 - A. **APPRECIATIONS-Chair Washington**
Chairman Washington shared sentiments of appreciation for Amaro at the salsa event and Copeland for concise minutes and notes. He also recognizes liaison Sandra Brown with her flyers being excellent and very editorial. Chairman Washington also shared sentiments of appreciation from the Windsor public library to the WHRC for donating candy, time, and service for the Halloween event, Armstrong, and ex-commissioner Richard Armstrong who were there to help hand out candies. Gayle Rizzo wants to send a personal thanks. Chairman Washington will send out a follow-up.
 - B. **Conversation on Colorism - November 14, 2021 from 5:00 -7:00 pm via Zoom**
Chairman Washington turned to Copeland for more details. Copeland shared that the event will talk about colorism which is a subset of racism. The purpose of the event is to converse with one another on what colorism is and to reflect on the changes that we can make in our community by starting with ourselves. Chairman Washington shared there will be a break on the conversation on the race due to planning Bridge Builders. Burke reiterated that we have a break from the main lineup of events to be able to discuss and plan more for the Bridge Builders award.
 - C. **Black History Month Feb 2022**

Chairman Washington shared that the One Book One Windsor February 1st a Tuesday. Burke shared that there is a John Lewish fellowship at CCSU and it would be great to get the scholar receiving the fellowship to be on the panel. Chairman Washington will reach out to help coordinate panelists for the event. Chairman Washington also shared that Black History trivia will be on February 10th a Thursday. Massa asked questions about who put it together, Chairman Washington said he does, and that Jeremy usually does the computer items but we have many folks who can help with tech. Chairman Washington also shared that there is a limit of six teams with four people each. Last year Grace Episcopal Church won and have two teams go at a time bracket. Burke is not sure if this will be in person or on Zoom depends on the circumstances. Chairman Washington asked if there are any other items slated for Feb. Burke is not sure outside the two aforementioned events.

Chairman Washington also shared that Tracy White the Gospel Choir director at Windsor High School (WHS) suggests having a gospel fest with the First Church in Windsor, Grace Episcopal, Hopewell, Archer Memorial AME Zion during a Sunday service. Hopewell may be able to host but Chairman Washington will provide additional information on that. Swade and Massa inquired when and where the event will be held. Chairman Washington shared that Gospel Fest is to celebrate Black history and Black culture. Massa suggests having First Church host the event. Swade inquired is this a religious service? Chairman Washington replied no it does not have to be. Swade emphasized that the WHRC needs to make sure it is not advertised as a Christian service. Chairman Washington reiterated that the purpose of the event would be Black history with no bearing on the church. The church format is who wants to come to sing at our event. Massa suggested that WHRC can do it in any auditorium. Chairman Washington suggested maybe going to LP Wilson auditorium to have a more central location. Massa and Swade emphasized once more that the WHRC needs to make sure the commission is not bipartisan. Burke will check to see if reservations are needed by location.

7. Old Business:

A. One Book One Windsor

Chairman Washington thanks Burke for ordering the books for all commissioners. Chairman Washington mentions that the event will be tied to Black history month and conversations on race series.

B. Indigenous People/Native American-Veterans Day

Chairman Washington shared praise that Sandra Brown did an excellent job on the flyers. The announcement page and WHRC website house the fliers. The website can be found [here](https://townofwindsorct.com/community-development/human-relations-commission/):

<https://townofwindsorct.com/community-development/human-relations-commission/>

Burke shared directions to access the Town of Windsor website; first, go to Departments, then Community Development, Go down to Human Relations Commission. Burke shared that in response to having comments, questions, and suggestions that Washington shared at the previous Critical Race Theory (CRT) event, a small form can be filled out to provide feedback and see previous videos and event fliers. Chairman Washington asked if others have pictures that can be added to the page. Copeland will reach out to folks who took pictures at Juneteenth to provide pictures. Chairman Washington inquired do people know we have a page? Burke made sure that we have a page for WHRC to access all of the work and things we have done, however since this is very new folks may not know about the page yet. Chairman Washington and all commissioners shared sentiments of gratitude for Burke and Sandra Brown for a great page. Burke also showed how to register via clicking on the registration link at the bottom of the WHRC page.

Burke also shared that the WHRC page has statistics on who has viewed the flyers or clicked on them via constant contact. Chairman Washington requested Burke share the many thanks from WHRC to Sandra Brown and others who helped in updating the page. Chairman Washington shared the WHRC did not have enough time to get anything out for Veterans Day. Burke shared that there is a ceremony and music in the council chamber on 11/11/2021 at 7:30 or 7:00 pm. Chairman Washington closed this part of the conversation by inquiring if any commissioners have any comments on Indigenous people day.

C. Bridge Builders

Chairman Washington requested that the commission add the Bridge Builders section to the meeting since there was a typo in the agenda. Burke remind commissioners that January 27nd, 2022 is our date for the event. Burke

and Chairman Washington shared that the old form to submit nomination works, however minor typos need to be corrected first before sending it out. Chairman Washington recommends revising the nomination form and sending it out. Burke reminded folks the 2019 and 2020 ones were merged due to COVID constraints. Chairman Washington asked about timing of when the WHRC will release the application including keep the format the same, revise the dates, and release it on Monday November 15th, 2021 with a deadline on Monday December 6th, 2021. Massa inquired who do these things go out to? Copeland and Chairman Washington shared the forms go out to the general public. Copeland also shared that a shorter time frame may work better since extension only prolongs. Chairman Washington notes that the Commission often has to provide more recipients since community members either do not submit any due to the write up or forget to turn it in on time. Swade requested that a list of previous recipients can be sent out. Burke shared that he will email previous recipients to all commissioners. Chairman Washington shared that the application will be out for three weeks and for commissioners who want to stay after to review the applications. Chairman Washington also inquired when is Hanukkah? Swade answered it is a bit earlier this year around Thanksgiving this year.

D. Commissions

Chairman Washington shared the idea of having all the commissions come together is tabled for now until the new chairperson of the personnel committee is nominated. Councilor Bress has become the new Mayor and Chairman Washington wants to wait to see who will be new councilors. Massa inquired if it is a regular thing for commissions to come together? Chairman Washington shared that this is a first and new initiative the WHRC is fronting. Massa reshared sentiments that there is overlap and great to come together. Swade mentioned that there are some commissions that work together. Chairman Washington reiterated the WHRC will wait until new folks are situated.

8. Items from Commissioners:

Chairman Washington yielded his time to Massa who has something to share. Massa is looking for services available to a young man who is a Haitian refugee. After Biden won miscommunication that the gates are open to coming in the US. Haiti is in disarray and unsafe to live in after the assassination of the president and earthquakes. This young man emigrated from Haiti to Chile at 38 yrs. old. He and a friend walked from Chile to Texas and it took them 4 months. When they got to Texas passports were taken away to Louisiana camp where they were fed cereal for breakfast lunch and dinner. Through the connections of Massa's friends, he is able to stay with folks in CT. There are no papers and though Chairman Washington and local supporters a judge was able to be found to represent him. Massa assisted him with social services, food, clothing, and money. Massa, the only reason for bringing it up is because she is searching for people to help get him out of his current situation or provide resources. IRIS is another resource for people mainly with papers but not much for him. Massa shared that he is scared he will get deported back to Haiti. Massa inquired if there is any knowledge or resources that would be much appreciated.

Massa also reports on the pet food pantry that is being dissolved because the woman who has been running it for a very long time is closing it. When the police station was moved, the dog pound was also removed including the food pantry. Massa spoke with the animal control person who is also passionate as well and taking the shed they have to distribute food. The animal control person is working on getting another shed or place. Location is key since the current place is not suitable for the need. Massa asked closer to the Hartford area who has the food and pet pantry. Roger Wolcott, LP Wilson, other places are full. Massa is asking about assisting with space. Amaro shared that WHRC's role is to support with a drive not help find a place. Massa persisted a space is needed, not just a drive to help address the issue. Suede shared that the social services section of the town has an office at LP Wilson that has the foodbank and to maybe see if they have space or can host something in tandem. Massa said she's been to LP Wilson and asked if the shed can be placed at LP Wilson. Burke suggested the Wilson Firehouse place a shed on, potentially locate a place on the property. Massa is interested in helping with finding a place for the shed. Massa said she will contact Burke more for connecting with resources such as contacting Paul Goldberg the fire administrator. Massa shared this issue has to be taken place first. Amaro suggested to do a drive and

have folks drop it off at the Police station for potential temporary storage. Massa shared a drive-through accessible drop-off point.

Swade shared Windsor has a large Jamaican population and maybe sometime in the future, WHRC can do a Jamaican festival to celebrate their talent. Chairman Washington and Massa agreed and shared that maybe the event can be expanded to celebrate all West Indian community members and culture. Swade inquired perhaps WHRC would want to do something in that area in the future. Chairman Washington suggested that this idea would be a good bridge opportunity with the town of Bloomfield. Swade agrees with potentially partnering.

Burke provided an update on bus trips. The group rate for Pequot Museum is \$15 for adults \$13 for seniors. Burke reached out for quotes for busses, Datco and Post Roads require a specific date since the price starts at one point during the week and goes up during the weekend. Lindsey Limousine quotes \$1544 for a 9 hour round trip. Burke said if we can cut down the time we can make it work. Burke also emphasized a need for specific dates and times for the event. Massa and Copeland inquired if folks who have access to cars or transportation can drive there since it is located in Fox Woods. Burke suggested that we need to know what date or range of dates with an estimate of how many people are going to the event. Chairman Washington suggests that these trips are to help educate the community and the public. In a way it is not about the commission but about the community to participate.

Chairman Washington brought up Roosevelt's house in NY organized by Diane which turned out to be a wonderful trip with a big bus of 30-40 people. It was a well-received trip by the community and folks who attended go to visit the Vanderbilt house. Similar sentiments were shared with the African American museum, folks got a lot out of the trip. Chairman Washington emphasizes this to say it is not for the commission but an experience they can be educated from and learn from. Unless a person experience racism, it is hard to fully grasp and lectures, panels, or events can only do so much while an experience does more. Massa agrees with Chairman Washington and was thinking about the Senior Center that coordinates events all the time. Burke shared he was thinking about inviting Rebecca from the Senior Center to give them some ideas and set up the whole trip for the estimated amount of people. Burke and Massa suggested we potentially go through LP Wilson or the Senior Center since both have the context or systems for transportation and registration already set up. Burke will see if some representatives can come to the WHRC December meeting. Chairman Washington request LP Wilson to be a host for the events.

Massa shared that Hanukah is from Nov 28 to Dec 6th. Swade mentioned the major thing is Hanukah and also mentioned that we should observe Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27th, 2022. Chairman Washington talked about two books; my sister's keeper about survivor's experiences in the Holocaust. Chairman Washington also talked about Mrs. Clemonson who knew Anne Frank and others who survived Auschwitz camp. Chairman Washington shared that the new generation of children and young folks do not know about the Holocaust. Swade mentioned that the Holocaust deniers are becoming larger in the United States after gaining momentum from previous global events. Massa, Swade, Chairman Washington, and Copeland agreed that the kids these days do not know much about important historical events. Chairman Washington and Swade discussed that the survivors are almost gone and the deniers are frightening. Massa shared anything WHRC can do for younger folks has a lot to do with the superintendent.

Amaro suggested having a conversation with Dr. Hill. Amaro also shared that the WHRC should realize the school is already doing something for a project in relation to any of these topics that come under the umbrella of WHRC. Amaro suggests the WHRC can promote it as an awareness if the school clubs are already doing it. Chairman Washington shared that information is not being shared to be a part of what the school is doing and WHRC is often left out on internal events despite reaching out and wanting to support. Chairman Washington also shared that the relation is the same with Loomis, WHRC does not know about the events or things the school clubs are doing unless someone constantly goes to the website.

Swade suggests that the WHRC checks out the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) which has a plethora of resources and could potentially partner with the schools and commission. Copeland shared that she has done work in tandem

to ADL as well too and would be happy to look into it more if needed. Chairman Washington suggests WHRC check out more events online at each of the schools as a start. Amaro suggests WHRC talk with Parker, the principal of WHS which is more appropriate to help finalize for this year and start running with for next fall to start to align and or piggyback off of them. Alignment with the high school but also supporting the work of the high schoolers.

9. Adjournment:

Chairman Washington made a motion for adjournment at 7:42 pm which was seconded by Swade.

Respectfully submitted,

Castella Copeland, Secretary