

West Hartford Human Rights Commission
Wednesday, September 11, 2024, 7 PM – Special Meeting
Elmwood Community Center

In Attendance:

Chair: Mark Linabury

Treasurer: Eric Schoenberg

Secretary: Alana Butler

Commissioners: Kathryn Lance, PJ Paneru, Bruno Venero

Town Representative: Pramod Pradhan

Not in Attendance:

Cara Paiuk

Amended Special Meeting Minutes:

- Mark called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM and began with a moment of silence for September 11th, followed by attendance and reading the Mission Statement
- The May 2024 meeting minutes were approved with a motion by Mark, motion seconded by Eric, and carried unanimously
- Due to the resignation of West Hartford Human Rights Commission Secretary Winnie Tantrapora, Mark made a motion to nominate Alana Butler as Secretary, seconded by Eric, and carried unanimously.
- Introductions:
 - Mark: Resident of West Hartford for more than 30 years, retired with primary career employment in state agencies focusing on equal education opportunities, registered Democrat
 - Bruno: Resident of West Hartford for over 20 years, therapist with the Village, registered Republican
 - Alana: Resident of West Hartford for over 20 years, Senior Director at Jewish Women International focusing on domestic violence, registered Democrat
 - Eric: Longest serving member of HRC, Attorney, has worked with undocumented citizens, registered Independent.
 - Katie: Resident of West Hartford for 6 years, works on global peace for Mercy Corps, registered Democrat
 - PJ: Resident for 18 years, from Nepal, works in Sales and Marketing, registered Democrat
 - Pramod: Community engagement librarian for the town, liaison for HRC
- Commission Vacancies:

- Kristyn Rosen-Jacobs has stepped down as of today. Winnie Tantrapora also tenured his resignation this summer.
- 2 vacancies – the mayor and town council are reviewing applicants currently
- The commission typically consists of 6 democrats, one republican, and 2 independents – all residents of West Hartford
- Park Road Parade:
 - This year's Park Road Parade on October 5, 2024, will be the final parade
 - We have a banner, and will line up to march at 9:30 am
 - Parking on Kane street and off of Quaker Lane
 - Children/families can join
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day Celebration
 - Official anniversary of the declaration is Dec 10
 - People (including children) of all nationalities will read the declaration aloud
 - There are typically musicians and musical entertainment
 - Will be held in January
 - Pramod will send out more information
- Strategic Planning
 - We will guide our work forward with topics of interest for the commission, get a sense of our preferred issues and where we should move forward
 - Community members can come forward to ask us to review certain issues. For example, a community member came forward to seek our assistance for bullying at Sedgwick Middle School
 - In the past, we've had speakers such as the Assistant Superintendent come talk about curriculum, we've done food donations, other issues as they arise
 - While we are unsure about funding, we can partner with the library on programs related to human rights topics
 - Topics put forward:
 - Gender-based violence (October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month - DVAM)
 - Homelessness
 - Food Insecurity
 - Pedestrian rights
 - Interfaith solidarity – especially in light of middle east conflict
 - We discussed when and how to make statements to the town council
 - The strategic plan will also include bringing in speakers to talk to the town council to provide education on key issues
- Other Business

- Social media:
 - Alana and Katie will work on DVAM social media post (this was agreed following a motion by Alana, seconded by Eric, and carried unanimously)
 - There was a negative comment on our Facebook page following our post on Hamas. We discussed offering for the commented to come to a meeting
 - We will use social media to encourage people to come forward with local issues
- Next meeting: We unanimously agreed to change the next meeting date to October 8, 2024, since October 2 is Rosh Hashana
- Meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm