

Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Time: 6:45 PM

Location: Elmwood Community Center

In Attendance: Mark Linabury, Bruno Venero, David Ware, Alana Butler, Eric Schoenberg, Pramod Pradhan, Katie Lance

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:50 PM.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Successful event
- Mayor's proclamation read out loud
- Strong media coverage, with pictures and videos taken.
- Plan on increasing student involvement in future celebrations.

4. FGM Legislation Support

- The primary discussion centered on supporting bipartisan legislation sponsored by Rep. Jillian Gilchrest to ban Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in CT.
- The commission reviewed the legislation and its significance in addressing FGM as a form of gender-based violence and a human rights violation.
- A press conference was held the previous day, featuring powerful remarks from survivors of FGM.
- The commission has a letter of support for the legislation and noted that the governor has expressed support for the pending bill.
- **Motion:** To have the commission formally submit a letter of support for this legislation.
 - **Vote:** Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

5. New Business

- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
 - The commission discussed ensuring that healthy relationship education is included in the town's school curriculum.
 - Action: Follow up with the school district to confirm its inclusion.
- Birthright Citizenship
 - Discussion on Trump's order to end Birthright Citizenship, which was blocked by a court.
 - Birthright Citizenship is part of the 14th Amendment.
 - In Connecticut, approximately 4,300 children with foreign-born parents could be affected.
 - Action: The commission will continue to monitor this issue.
- Foreign Aid and Impact on the Community
 - Discussion on Trump's efforts to shut down USAID and the disproportionate impact on the local community.
 - Noted that many residents could lose jobs as a result.
 - Resolution Proposal: The commission discussed issuing a statement in support of USAID's humanitarian work.

- Final Resolution:
"The West Hartford Human Rights Commission supports the uninterrupted continuation of USAID's humanitarian work."
- **Motion:** To adopt the resolution and post it on the commission's official Facebook page.
 - **Vote:** Unanimous approval. Motion carries.
- Social Media Platform Discussion
 - The commission discussed moving from Facebook to Blue Sky due to recent platform issues. More research is required.
- Human Trafficking
 - Discussed human trafficking concerns brought up during the Declaration of Human Rights Celebration
 - We Are One Incorporated- raises awareness and provides resources.
- Immigration & Shelter System:
 - Discussed the potential impact of current immigration policies on the shelter system.
 - Concerns raised about how recent administrative decisions affect local immigrant communities.
- United Nations Human Rights Council
 - President Trump signed an executive order aimed at withdrawing the United States from the United Nations Human Rights Council - we will monitor this
- Juneteenth Celebration & Pride Festival
 - The commission will have a booth at the Juneteenth Celebration on June 14th (12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.).
 - Participation in the Pride Festival on June 21st was also confirmed.
 - Strategies to engage attendees include distributing Declaration of Human Rights booklets and candy.

Action Items:

1. Katie:
 - Post the letter of support for FGM legislation on Facebook.
 - Post the USAID resolution on Facebook.
2. Alana:
 - Add the Human Rights Commission's signature to the letter of support for FGM legislation.
 - Follow up with the school district on healthy relationship education.
 - Ensure all new commission members are added to the Google Group.

Next Meeting:

- Date: March 5th
- Time: 6:45 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.