

West Hartford Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: October 8, 2025

Call to Order: 6:51 p.m.

Attendees: Alana Butler, Eric Schoenberg, Eva Jacobson, Katie Lance, David Ware, Pramod Pradhan

Guests: Martey Rhine, Deborah Shoflick, Peg Williams, Jareka Dellenbaugh-Dempsey, Samantha Sommers, Arjun Patel, Robert Karvelis, Eaman O, Melissa Cyr, Marg Smith, Padraigh, Ted Mancom

Absent: Mark Linabury

- Public Comments: 9 people spoke in support of the proposed resolution
- Approval of Minutes
 - Motioned by: Eric Schoenberg
 - Seconded by: Eva Jacobson
 - Result: Approved unanimously
- Confirmed Reappointments: Alana Butler, Mark Linabury, Eva Jacobson
- Motion to adopt the [amended strategic plan](#) for 2025-2026
 - Motioned by: Eric Schoenberg
 - Seconded by: David Ware
 - Result: All in favor
- Committee Reports
 - Social Media & Engagement Subcommittee: Immigration panel scheduled for October 21 at 5:30 pm at Noah Webster
 - Hate Crimes & Hate Speech Working Group: Meeting with Michael Bloom, Senior Director of External Affairs and Engagement and Hate Crimes Initiative of CT Coordinator, has been rescheduled to October 24
- Motion to create a working group to revise the proposed resolution [Human Rights in Business and Governance](#)
 - Motioned by: Eric Schoenberg
 - Seconded by: David Ware
 - Result: All in favor
- Nomination for Secretary: Katie Lance: Unanimous Vote
- Next Meeting: November 5, 2025
 - Proposed agenda items: Universal Declaration of Human Rights Celebration, proposed resolution [Human Rights in Business and Governance](#)
- Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM

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Call to Order: 6:51 p.m.

Present: Alana Butler, Eric Schoenberg, Eva Jacobson, David Ware, Pramod Pradhan

Absent: Mark Linabury

Arrived Late: Katie Lance (arrived around 7:15 due to travel)

- Public Comments: 9 people spoke in support of the proposed resolution
- Approval of Minutes
 - Motioned by: Eric Schoenberg
 - Seconded by: Eva Jacobson
 - Result: Passed with all in favor (except Comm. Lance who was not yet present for this vote)
- Confirmed Reappointments: Alana Butler, Mark Linabury, Eva Jacobson
- Motion to adopt the amended strategic plan for 2025-2026
 - Motioned by: Eric Schoenberg
 - Seconded by: David Ware
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 - Result: Passed with all in favor (except Comm. Lance who was not yet present for this vote)
- Nomination for Secretary: Katie Lance: Unanimous Vote
- Next Meeting: November 5, 2025
 - Proposed agenda items: Universal Declaration of Human Rights Celebration, proposed resolution Human Rights in Business and Governance
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Hand Delivered by Kathryn Lance

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2026 FEB - 6 PM 4:35
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Oct.
Minutes
packet.

West Hartford Human Rights Commission 2025-2026 Strategic Plan
DRAFT

Mission Statement

The Town of West Hartford Human Rights Commission is dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights of all residents. We strive to foster an inclusive and diverse community where every individual is treated respectfully and equitably, regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, age, spiritual or religious beliefs, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, socio-economic status, immigration status, disability, present or past history of physical or mental illnesses, including but not limited to these characteristics.

2025-2026 Priorities:

1. Food & Housing Insecurity
2. Immigration & Rights of Non-Citizens
3. Addressing Hate Crimes & Hate Speech
4. Human Rights in West Hartford School System
5. Community Concerns & Emerging Issues

Key Objectives:

1. Build commissioner knowledge in priority areas to strengthen the Commission's expertise and effectiveness.
2. Educate the public about priority areas and human rights issues affecting West Hartford.
3. Raise awareness broadly through visible communications and public events.
4. Engage and consult the community to understand concerns and offer informed recommendations.

Key Actions & Activities:

- Invite expert speakers to meetings to deepen commissioners' knowledge.
- Offer public panels, programs, and workshops to expand education and awareness.
- Publish op-eds to raise awareness on priority issues.
- Use social media channels to inform and engage the community.
- Refresh the Annual Celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Partner with local organizations on targeted awareness campaigns.
- Conduct a community survey to identify human rights concerns.
- Invite community input on emerging human rights issues through open calls for submissions.
- Rotate commissioner attendance at Town Council meetings to stay informed about current concerns and offer recommendations when appropriate.

Affirming West Hartford's Commitment to Human Rights in Business and Governance

WHEREAS, the Town of West Hartford is committed to protecting and advancing human rights, dignity, and equity for all residents; and

WHEREAS, West Hartford is home to vibrant immigrant and refugee communities whose contributions enrich our schools, businesses, and neighborhoods, and who deserve to live and work free from fear, discrimination, or intimidation; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 the West Hartford Town Council unanimously adopted a *Resolution Affirming West Hartford's Commitment to Equity and Inclusion*, declaring our town a place where all residents are welcome, respected, and valued; and

WHEREAS, this present resolution builds on that commitment by recognizing that human rights must be safeguarded not only through community values but also through the conduct of businesses, municipal practices, and the use of technology; and

WHEREAS, businesses play an important role in shaping the well-being of our community, both through employment and through their broader impacts on human rights, directly and indirectly, including the effects of how their products, services, or investments are used beyond the borders of our town; and

WHEREAS, workplaces can become sites where human rights are threatened, including through unlawful or discriminatory practices such as unauthorized raids or intimidation targeting immigrant workers; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), unanimously endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, provide a global standard for preventing and addressing human rights harms connected to business activity; and

WHEREAS, these principles rest on three pillars: (1) the duty of governments to protect human rights, (2) the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and (3) the need for access to remedy for victims of abuses; and

WHEREAS, adopting these principles aligns with West Hartford's values of fairness, inclusion, and social responsibility, and empowers businesses in our town to stand up for the dignity and safety of their workers and communities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of West Hartford affirms its commitment to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and

encourages all businesses operating in the town to uphold these standards of human rights and dignity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council requests a review of all Town expenditures, contracts, and investment funds, including retirement and pension holdings, to ensure that public resources are not connected to human rights abuses, and that this information be reported publicly for transparency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager and relevant departments explore the adoption of procurement and investment guidelines consistent with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and report back to the Town Council and the Human Rights Commission with recommendations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of West Hartford commits to protecting the privacy and safety of its residents by prohibiting the sharing of data from automated enforcement technologies, including red light cameras and license plate readers, with outside agencies, including federal immigration enforcement agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); and notes that municipalities in Illinois such as Evanston and Oak Park have already taken similar steps after investigations revealed improper data-sharing, and that companies such as Flock Safety have restricted access in California, Virginia, and Illinois in response to strong legal protections; therefore, the Town must act proactively to ensure West Hartford residents' data is not accessed or shared without oversight or consent ([ABC7 Chicago](#), [Chicago Tribune](#), [Colorado Newsline](#), [ACLU National](#), [ACLU-CT](#), [CBS8 San Diego](#)).

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2025.