

Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes

Feb 18th 2021

Attendees: Carolyn Carey, Anitha Elango, Mary Etter, Ritu Goel, Mary Justine Hockenberry, Linda Jeski, Beena Pandit, Karell Rose.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for the December 2020 and January 2021 meetings were approved.

Public input: None

HRC Logo Discussion: A motion was made to approve 150 dollars to pay **Other Designs** to create a HRC logo. The motion was approved unanimously.

Opening doors to mental health: An event HRC is co-sponsoring with SWAFF. Chairperson Ritu Goel explained that the event was on raising awareness of mental health issues in the community and focusses on the resources and help available.

MLK Day Event Discussion: Bina Pandit said that the event was meaningful and the topics discussed were very relevant and needed. However, attendance was less than expected for a much-needed community conversation. Ritu Goel mentioned that the event was better attended than in the past and that steps can be taken to spread information on the events on social media, including a watch party. M.J. Hockenberry mentioned that bringing in participants and moderators from different backgrounds may increase community participation. Anitha Elango raised the point that the moderators could be asked to be more concise with their input and that social media and its tools would be an efficient way for bringing in people from the community.

Future Events for HRC: Charlie Margolis talked about the mutual project he was discussing with Mary Etter; a Tri-town poetry event called "*Coming out of COVID*" with poets from the Tri-towns reading poetry and Mary Etter said that the poetry would be preserved. This would be a public event, outdoors. Ritu mentioned that it could be held in one of the town pavilions.

Chair's report: None

Liaison Report: M.J. Hockenberry mentioned that the town clerk had not listed the HRC meeting and that she had clarified to the Town council clerk that it was more of a discussion than a formal event. Anitha raised a question on the meeting minutes and Mary Etter said that meeting minutes will be posted once they were approved. Ritu mentioned that she usually, sent minutes from the other commissions she was part of to the Town Clerk, Town Council Clerk and the Town Manager's clerk.

Future Events: Ritu mentioned that SWAFF is working with "*Interval House*" an organization dealing with victims of domestic abuse, and violence, HRC could work with them as well. She would request the Mary Jane, the director Interval House to talk to HRC about the resources and the help that could be provided by Interval House. Bina Pandit mentioned SNEHA, an organization that helps South Asian women who need help with domestic violence etc. Linda Jeski talked about the book club that she could lead and the topics and appropriate books that could be picked for the club. She mentioned "Kitchen House" and Ritu mentioned "White Fragility" as possible books. Mary Etter said that the library had years of experience and resources including long lists of books on different topics, age groups and that the library could help with getting multiple copies of the books. Linda Jeski will co-ordinate the book club with the library. Bina Pandit mentioned that a good topic could be community gardening and elaborated that many people in the community are already involved with community gardening and in the garden club. Anitha Elango mentioned that an outdoor event on Indigenous people could be organized and that the *Nowashe Village* exhibit which "The Wood" has opened, could be a venue.