

## **PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

**June 7, 2021  
8:00 p.m.**

### **South Windsor Town Council**

#### **PURPOSE: To receive citizen input on a Proposed Ordinance Establishing a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission**

Mayor Paterna called the Public Hearing to order at 8:00 p.m.; and requested that the Clerk of the Council read the call of the meeting (a copy of which is attached hereto, **Exhibit A**).

Mayor Paterna asked if there was anyone from the public that would like to speak. There were approximately eleven (11) people present in the audience.

#### Public Comment

Mrs. Lisa Kopper, 1 Autumn Drive, came forward and spoke in favor of creating a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission.

Mrs. Daria Plummer, 235 Orchard Hill Drive, stated that she favors the creation of a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission. Under duties, there should be more clarity.

Mrs. Brenda Vetere, 49 Wood Pond Road, said she is in favor of the creation of a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission.

Mr. Adam Wood, 9 Rustic Lane, stated he feels it is important to have a Commission and feels the Police Department should have more support from the community.

Mr. Jason Wasserman, 75 Petersen Way, said he supports the creation of a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission. Mr. Wasserman stated he hopes when the Commission is formed, they will seek out experts who can help the Commission make decisions.

Mr. Neal Frank, 130 Scott Drive, stated he supports the establishment of a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission and looks forward to positive changes.

Ms. Madison Gonzalez, 1015 Ellington Road, said she is in support of creating a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission and looks forward to the work of the Commission.

Town Manager Maniscalco read the following emails into the record:

Claire Conroy (**Exhibit B**)  
Elizabeth McGuire (**Exhibit C**)  
Cody Guarnieri (**Exhibit D**)

Councilor Snyder read the following email into the record:

Roy Normen (**Exhibit E**)

**(Continued on Next Page)**

## PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

June 7, 2021

### Public Comment (Continued)

Mr. Dan Edwards, 131 Hilton Drive, came before the Council and questioned why the Town needs a separate Commission because it already has existing Commissions that do not meet. The Council should look into this further.

Mr. Braden Migneault, 74 Miller Road, stated that this Commission is 100% necessary.

Mayor Paterna asked for a Straw Vote, the results of which were as follows:

Those supporting an Ordinance creating a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission: 7

Those in opposition of an Ordinance creating a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission: 4

The public hearing was closed at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Deborah W. Reid", is written over a horizontal line.

Deborah W. Reid  
Clerk of the Council

**Public Hearing Notice – Exhibit A**

**Email (Conroy) – Exhibit B**

**Email (McGuire) - Exhibit C**

**Email (Guarnieri) – Exhibit D**

**Email (Normen) – Exhibit E**

received 06/03/2021 @ 4:20 pm  
C. J. Reid



OFFICE  
OF THE  
TOWN COUNCIL

# Town of South Windsor

1540 SULLIVAN AVENUE • SOUTH WINDSOR, CT 06074-2786

AREA CODE 860/644-2511

FAX 860/644-3781

Exhibit A

TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL INQUIRER

May 31, 2021

LEGAL AD

TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR

Notice is hereby given that the South Windsor Town Council has set Monday, June 7, 2021, at 8:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the South Windsor Town Hall, 1540 Sullivan Avenue, South Windsor, Connecticut, as the time and place for a Public Hearing to receive citizen input on a proposed Ordinance establishing a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission, a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Dated at South Windsor, Connecticut this 27<sup>th</sup> day of May 2021.

Attested to by:

Deborah W. Reid  
Deborah W. Reid  
Clerk of the Council

<p>PUBLIC NOTICE LEGAL AD TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR</p> <p>Notice is hereby given that the South Windsor Town Council has set <u>Monday, June 7, 2021, at 8:00 p.m.</u> in the Council Chambers of the South Windsor Town Hall, 1540 Sullivan Avenue, South Windsor, Connecticut, as the time and place for a Public Hearing to receive citizen input on a <u>proposed Ordinance establishing a Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission</u>, a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Dated at South Windsor, Connecticut this 27<sup>th</sup> day of May 2021.</p> <p>Attested to by: <u>Deborah W. Reid</u> Clerk of the Council</p> <p>Journal Inquirer May 31, 2021</p>
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June 7th, 2021

Public comment on the ordinance regarding Social Justice & Racial Equity Commission

To whom it may concern,

My name is Claire Conroy. My husband and I have lived in South Windsor for the past five years. As future adoptive parents, we are doing many things to prepare ourselves. One of the most important ones is studying racial equity and social justice. We are both white, and therefore we do not have the same lived experiences as our neighbors of color.

As a white woman, I have the privilege of having my voice heard. As an educator and a resident of the town, I strongly support the proposals laid out in the document regarding the commission. I believe that our schools should reflect our diversity. According to EdSight, as of October 1st, 2019, this was a rough breakdown of the racial identifications in our district: 55% of our students identified as White, 6% as Black or African American, 5% as Two or More Races, 9% of Hispanic or Latino of any race, and 25% Asian. We have phenomenal teachers in this district, but they do not represent our diverse student body: 94.9% of teachers identified as White in the same report.

As a doctoral student, I study disproportionate representation through the lens of race. In Connecticut, we have one of the highest opportunity gaps in the country. Loosely defined, that means that our students of color do not have equitable access to the same high-quality education that our white students do. Therefore, I encourage our community to ask the following questions when considering why this proposal is so crucial:

What am I teaching my children about race, ethnicity, and culture?

What do I understand about race, ethnicity, and culture?

What is my racial identity, and why is it important?

What experiences have I had or been denied due to my race? What about people who do not look like me?

If you are thinking to yourself, at this moment, that white privilege does not exist or that one's racial identity does not have an impact on one's lived experiences, I urge you to reframe your thinking. I encourage you to complete the brief but powerful activity by Peggy McIntock entitled *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*. I have attached it to my email.

I provide you with a series of questions asked by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in a March 30th, 2017 article entitled, *Language of Appeasement*.

## Exhibit B

- Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?” Equity responds: “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”
- Inclusion asks, “Has everyone’s ideas been heard?” Justice responds, “Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”
- Diversity asks, “How many more of [pick any minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?” Equity responds, “What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?”
- Inclusion asks, “Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?” Justice challenges, “Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?”
- Diversity asks, “Isn’t it separatist to provide funding for safe spaces and separate student centers?” Equity answers, “What are people experiencing on campus that they don’t feel safe when isolated and separated from others like themselves?”
- Inclusion asks, “Wouldn’t it be a great program to have a panel debate Black Lives Matter? We had a Black Lives Matter activist here last semester, so this semester we should invite someone from the alt-right.” Justice answers, “Why would we allow the humanity and dignity of people or our students to be the subject of debate or the target of harassment and hate speech?”
- Diversity celebrates increases in numbers that still reflect minoritized status on campus and incremental growth. Equity celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems and increases in supports for people’s life chances as reported by those who have been targeted.
- Inclusion celebrates awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse candidate pool. Justice celebrates getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritized groups.

It is not enough to leave a seat available at the table if a person does not feel comfortable joining the conversation or does not have the means to. You do not have to have the skill to join a discussion on racial equity and social justice. You only need the will. That is why I strongly support the Social Justice and Racial Equity Commission. I look forward to seeing future steps towards rebuilding South Windsor.

Thank you for your time.

Claire Conroy

Came in 6/5

**Roberts, Scott**

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**From:** lehmann, michael  
**Sent:** Monday, June 7, 2021 7:49 PM  
**To:** Roberts, Scott  
**Subject:** FW: [External]Comment for June 7th Meeting

Exhibit C

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**From:** erm999@aol.com [erm999@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 05, 2021 2:33 PM  
**To:** TownCouncilComments  
**Subject:** [External]Comment for June 7th Meeting

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or on clicking links from unknown senders.**

Submitted by:  
Elizabeth McGuire  
89 Heritage Drive  
South Windsor, CT

Good evening...

I am writing to support the creation of a town commission on social justice and racial equity. In South Windsor, we pride ourselves on being a welcoming community. And while I believe that we are, encouraging and embracing diversity must be an ongoing effort. This commission will ensure that we are actively engaged in that process.

A town with people of different races, religions, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and age, as well as varying income levels, creates a rich and dynamic town, where residents share different perspectives and most importantly learn from one another.

Towns must evolve and change to remain dynamic. Encouraging and embracing diversity helps communities stay vital. Even on the local level, we should remember the words of Abraham Lincoln who said in his Gettysburg Address that we must strive to "form a more perfect union."

Many surrounding towns have taken the lead on establishing similar commissions and South Windsor should do the same. Our town must make every effort to create a climate of fairness and inclusion in our schools, town government and the community at large.

CODY N. GUARNIERI, ESQ.  
39 Quarry Brook Drive, South Windsor, CT 06074  
cnguarnieri@gmail.com – (860) 338-4377

June 2, 2021

South Windsor Town Counsel  
c/o Clerk of the Council Deborah Reid  
Town Hall  
1540 Sullivan Avenue  
South Windsor, CT 06074

**Submitted via email only to:**  
**[towncouncilcomments@southwindsor-ct.gov](mailto:towncouncilcomments@southwindsor-ct.gov)**

**Re: Public Input of Cody N. Guarnieri, Esq.**  
**Proposed Ordinance**  
**Establishing a Social Justice & Racial Equity Commission**

Dear Mayor Paterna and Town Counselors,

I thank you for this opportunity to write you to express my support of the proposal for the establishment of a Social Justice & Racial Equity Commission in the Town of South Windsor.

While the opinions expressed in this submission are my own, I offer a brief introduction to my background. I am a resident of South Windsor since 2013. I live on Quarry Brook Drive with my wife, Julianne, and our three young children. I am also a partner with the law office of Brown, Paindiris & Scott, LLP, in Hartford, Connecticut. My law practice is focused mainly on criminal defense matters and civil litigation before the courts of the State of Connecticut, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Federal District of Connecticut. I am a James W. Cooper Fellow of the Connecticut Bar Foundation as well as a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. I serve on the House of Delegates and as the vice-chair of the Criminal Justice Section of the Connecticut Bar Association. I also serve on the Board of Directors and as the co-chair of the Criminal Law Section of the Hartford County Bar Association.

In my role as a Fellow of the Connecticut Bar Foundation I was part of the launch the *Constance Baker Motley Series on Systemic Racism and Racial Inequality*, which is a joint venture between the Connecticut Bar Association and the Connecticut Bar Foundation. I sit on the steering committee of the same. I have helped to produce sessions on voting rights with U.S. Rep Johanna Hayes, policing, as well as on creating roundtables within the legal community to discuss ideas and topics that came from the series, including having conversations about racism and the Rule of Law in modern America.

It is my strong belief that one of the greatest threats to the Rule of Law is systemic racism and institutional inequality, both real and perceived. Disparate access to or treatment by government

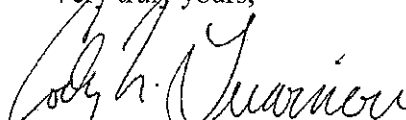
Brown Paindiris & Scott, LLP  
June 2, 2021  
Page 2

is an important issue that our leaders at every level should continue to address. We are almost 250 years into the American experiment and experimentation requires changing variables for the sake of discovery and improvement. Having reviewed the proposed ordinance for establishing of the Social Justice & Racial Equity Commission, I believe it is an excellent step in advancing the goals of equality and justice in our community and building on public support and respect for our local institutions.

Additionally, having reviewed recent minutes of the Counsel, I recognize that there has been some question of avoiding redundancy or overlapping duties of various public boards and commissions. I completely agree that avoiding redundancy and streamlining government, where possible, is an admirable goal as well. However, I do not believe that the proposed Social Justice & Racial Equity Commission's duties substantially overlap with those of other boards or commissions. Moreover, I believe that the expressed duties and functions of the proposed Commission, including offering anti-racism and anti-bias training to town employees and officials, fostering community discussion and awareness of topics in social justice and diversity, and ensuring town policies and procedures reflect these high aspirations, among others, are important enough to justify some amount of governmental redundancy.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity to be heard and would respectfully ask that the Counsel approve the ordinance for the formation of the Social Justice & Racial Equity Commission.

Very truly yours,



Cody N. Guarnieri

**Reid, Deborah**

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**From:** Contact form at Town of South Windsor CT <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 7, 2021 4:14 PM  
**To:** Town Council  
**Subject:** [External][Town of South Windsor CT] Equity Commision (Sent by Roy Normen, roycjnoir@aol.com)

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or on clicking links from unknown senders.**

Hello Town Council,

Roy Normen ([roycjnoir@aol.com](mailto:roycjnoir@aol.com)) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.southwindsor-ct.gov/user/606/contact>) at Town of South Windsor CT.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.southwindsor-ct.gov/user/606/edit>.

Message:

Roy Normen, 158 Homestead Dr., South Windsor

I am pleased that you are giving discrimination and racism in our town a priority. It is hard to believe that it exists. Certainly you have given it a lot of thought based on the draft ordinance. I can't attend your meeting tonight so here are my few comments. 1. I question whether you can structure the organization as proposed given the minority representation law. 2. You have left out a major group, the Asia American Pacific Island group (AAPI). This covers South Asia or India. 3. You should be collaborating with the school department's Equity Council. 4. This is a lot to expect of a group of volunteers. You should expect to have some experienced staff to support this project. 5. Specifying monthly meeting should be changed to regular meetings. Much can be accomplished outside of meetings. 6. Consider making the group an advisory committee to the Council initially. That way you can do the recruiting, get the committee established and then make it a Commission when it is fully functioning.