

Sullivan County Human Rights Commission
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting
Thursday, November 9, 2017

Meeting called to order at 5:43 p.m.

Present: Judy Balaban, Sam Encarnacion, Bill Liblick, Ari Mir-Pontier, Peggy Johansen, Donna Schick.
Via phone: Kathie Aberman.

Bill motioned to accept the minutes from October's monthly meeting, Kathie seconded; all in favor, motion passed.

Director's Report

Ari gave an overview of the recently attended Undoing Racism Workshop that she and Judy attended in Poughkeepsie on October 26 to October 28, 2017. The workshop was very enlightening and presented information about racism that was not comfortable for everyone, but which was very valuable for all in attendance. It is recommended that others attend in the future. The cost was \$350 for each.

Ari shared information about a poverty simulation session that she attended on November 1, 2017, sponsored by Health Equity and hosted by MISN at Cornell Cooperative Extension. The event included role playing by volunteers (Ari assumed the role of employer). Participants enacted roles provided to them as they entered. Some were children as young as infants, and others were parents, grandparents, homeless individuals, criminals, police, and many others. The session was insightful to everyone, and the speakers presented evidence based information about discrimination, racism, and bias. The event was free.

We will continue meeting with the group known as MUST, led by Les Kristt, to address living conditions at the Monticello Housing Authority. Date to be determined.

Ari and Judy attended a special Faith-based meeting with SALT members and several faith-based organizations. The purpose is to establish synergy between houses of worship and agencies throughout the county. The next meeting will be held on January 25, 2017 at 2pm, to be held at the EB Crawford Library.

Ari shared that a retired teacher from Fallsburg has met with her to present her idea on anti-bullying. Her idea is to create a Human Rights Commission Anti-Bullying Hotline that would be manned by staff, commissioners and volunteers. A special number would be necessary, and the procedures could mimic SALT's Hotline.

Sam expressed that the County may not allow a hotline without 24 hour coverage, but may allow a *warmline*. Ari will follow up with Dan Hust to see what the parameters are for such an endeavor.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Judy shared that a Law Enforcement meeting will be held on Thursday, November 16, at 8:30am in the Legislators' Chamber. We will follow up to determine how to use the monies collected this summer, and next steps for 2018. The emphasis will be on how to get communities and law enforcement to focus together.

The Strategic Plan Meeting will take place on December 11, 2017 at 5:30pm, and will be hosted by Kathie Aberman at her house – 37 Delaware Avenue, Liberty, NY.

Evadne Giannini will facilitate the meeting, and Ari is coordinating with the County to assure that she will be paid her fee.

Sam advised that he's working on 12/11/17, and may not be able to attend.

This is a pot-luck meeting. Please bring a dish to share with the others. Kathie will provide coffee, and tea.

A 5th Grade Assembly will be held on November 15, 2017 at 10:30am at the Monticello High School in Monticello. Sharon will be the main presenter, and two others may share their contributions to the assembly. Ari will present her experiences as a refugee child, and Sam will try to attend and provide his contribution to the program. Judy volunteered to speak if someone else is unable to do so.

The reappointment of 4 commissioners will take place at the next Legislators' meeting. Judy, Kathy, Gabriel and Bill will be presented via a resolution for voting by the legislators. The new terms will be staggered in order to prevent everyone expiring at the same time. There will be three 3 year terms and one 1 year term.

Outreach Committee

The communications plan recently presented by Sharon will be reviewed at the Strategic Plan Meeting. Its comprehensive nature will be very useful for the strategic plan.

Issues Committee

Sam, Gabriel and Ari will meet as soon as all schedules permit.

Ari advised that there are several complaints that need review. She advised that a recent one requires referral to an attorney experienced with tenant rights. The person has assets and was turned away by Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. It was suggested that the complainant reach out to Michael Sussman, People for People, or drop by the office located next to the Liberty Museum. The Sullivan County Bar Association was also suggested.

Budget Committee

Peggy asked about the most current Budget Summary. Ari advised that she is waiting to receive an updated copy from the Budget Department as she still does not have access to the New World system. Ari was told that the last summary was not up to date. The budget discussion will be tabled until the Strategic Plan meeting.

Other Discussions

Peggy reminded everyone of the presentation by John Conway on November 19, 2017 at the Daniel Pierce Library in Grahamsville at 2pm. Ari is coordinating with the County to assure that John is paid.

Donna expressed that we must be timely in response to the current situation on gender sexual harassment. She proposed that the HRC issue an Anti-Sexual Harassment Statement. Judy advised that this is something that Sharon can work on.

Judy polled the group to determine if we still want to hold our Monthly Meeting on 12/14, since we will have the Strategic Plan Meeting on 12/11. The group voted to scrap the Monthly Meeting in December. Ari will alert AnneMarie and Dan Hust.

Public Comment

We had two visitors in attendance. No public comments.

Motion to adjourn called by Donna, Bill seconded; Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Next monthly meeting: Thursday, January 11, 2018

Respectfully submitted by Ari Mir-Pontier, in the absence of Kathie Aberman, Secretary.