

MINUTES

Human Relations Commission
March 5, 2019 Meeting

Meeting called to order at 6:15 by Patricia Darling, Chair

1. Roll call: present were Patricia Darling, Chair; Roberta Swafford, Secretary; Leslie Ohta, Commission member; Sherri Tanguay, Director of Human Resources; Durlene Mikkelson, Director of Human Services.
2. Minutes of November 13, 2018, meeting were approved.
3. Public Comments: This is not on the agenda as members of the public do not attend HRC meetings although public notice is routinely given. Citizens who do attend would be given an opportunity to present relevant issues to the Commission.
4. Leslie Ohta reported that community organizations and non profits may use the Riverfront Community Center (RCC) without charge for up to 10 hours per year.
5. Committee Reports:

a. Housing: no report was presented as the Commission is waiting for a new member to act as housing liaison.

b. Affirmative Action/Recruitment Report - Sherri Tanguay

The first quarter of the fiscal year begins on July 1st. The recruitment report submitted to the Commission includes demographic information on all recruitments from the beginning of the fiscal year. Currently, demographic tracking includes Sex of the applicant and 6 Race groups: Hispanic, White, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native. Since beginning of the 2018/2019 Fiscal Year, Glastonbury town operations has hired several racial minorities: a library assistant, a librarian, application support specialist, and a part time CDL driver. On 7/27/18, a white/male was promoted to the position of police agent. An opening has been posted for a clinical social worker.

A challenge for the town is achieving diversity on the police force. There was a discussion on ways to enhance hiring of minorities. Various ways of reaching out to minority communities were discussed. For instance, talk to minority students about careers in law enforcement on school Career Days and job fairs. Sherri said that last summer the Glastonbury Police Chief went to Welles Village to meet with residents there. Another suggestion was to visit elementary schools to discuss law enforcement as a career path. Tools for evaluating candidates were identified: written test, background check, interview with the Chief, interviews with other staff all of which would provide an opportunity to meet and evaluate the applicant. There was discussion about the impact of affordable housing on recruitment. Sherri also made the point that improving the diversity of Town staff, particularly on the police force, may help attract diverse candidates as it would improve the perception that Glastonbury is a welcoming community.

c. Human Services Report - Durlene Mikkelson

Durlene discussed various programs available to provide financial assistance to residents. There is fuel assistance provided by the State that 226 households in town receive. Human Services is available to help residents apply for the program. Public donations given by local churches, town employees, and town residents are also available to help residents in need. The Riverfront Community Center (RCC) has a food pantry. There is also a tax relief program available for seniors who qualify. Seniors interesting in the program should contact Kathy Carfi at Social Services (860) 652-7644.

Recently there has been an uptick in evictions - 4 in the last 3 weeks. The staff deals with both owners and renters. These cases often present challenges: people who have not paid their rent or mortgage; people who are hoarders which may result in the residence being condemned as unsafe.

The town also provides services to seniors such as transportation. Senior services seeks to create an "age friendly", livable environment for seniors. There is a program at RCC to help seniors improve their balance. It is held once a week for 6 months.

Youth and Family Services hosted a visit on February 20, 2019, at Welles Village by Jeff Krieger, principal cellist with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. The "Meet the Cello" event, funded by a grant provided by the Music Performance Trust Fund, featured classical and jazz compositions. Kids were given an opportunity to actually play a cello by running a bow over the strings of the instrument.

Theatre was another area sponsored by Human Services. In May the annual spring production will be Willie Wonka. Peter Pan Players, young people from Glastonbury who audition and are selected, will perform the play at all Glastonbury elementary schools as well as at the RCC. All of the youths participating in the play saw a production of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory at the Bushnell because of the generosity of the Barone family.

The 2019 summer musical presentation will be "Footloose." Auditions, open to Glastonbury young people 7 years and older, will be held on May 6th and 7th from 6-10 p.m. at the GHS auditorium. Performance dates are August 8, 9, 10th.

6. Martin Luther King Events - Leslie Ohta

Town of Glastonbury supports MLK events.

Last summer IRIS (Integrated Refugee Immigrant Services), a nonprofit in New Haven which processes new refugees, planned a civil rights pilgrimage to the south. Twelve girls from the New Haven area traveled by bus to Richmond, VA, Birmingham, AL, and Atlanta, GA, which were at the center of civil rights activities. The girls visited many museums and historical landmarks of civil rights movement. The trip lasted 8 days. The cost of bus transportation itself was \$10,600. The money was raised by donations from local organizations, including MLK (\$500), First Church (\$2500), and South Church (\$2500), and citizens of Glastonbury.

On March 10th, six of the 12 girls will share stories of their experiences at the RCC. There will be a reception prior to the presentation. Food will be provided by 3 local Syrian refugee women and a number of advocacy groups will have tables with information regarding their mission.

MLK community conversations: (they are held at RCC)

In April there will be a community conversation about climate change. The event will be cosponsored by the Connecticut Round Table on Climate and Jobs. The central theme is the impact of climate on jobs. Areas of discussion include solar energy, public health implications of climate change, the disparate impact on poor and minority communities. Wind power will also be a part of the discussion as it is expected that it will provide lots of jobs. This event will be held during the legislative session when a number of environmental proposals will be presented to and considered by the Legislature.

September the topic is Mass Incarceration - school to prison pipeline. Starting in elementary school minority youth are disproportionately suspended or expelled. That early stigma can follow these children throughout their lives, including spending time in prison.

There are organizations that donate funds to enhance these community discussions including Hartford Foundation For Public Giving as well as the Town of Glastonbury, Glastonbury businesses and residents.

7. Chair's Report

"Discriminated Against in Glastonbury?" introduces HRC's involvement in the area of discrimination to the public. The statement identifies areas of the law that prohibit discrimination and categories that are protected from discrimination. Should a person feel that the town has discriminated against them, they can file a complaint with the HRC. Information regarding how to file a complaint is available at the HRC website. Earlier discussions on this matter considered "voluntary settlement" and "referral to CHRO". After discussing the statement, it was decided to adopt the present version which was revised in March 2019. A press release will be issued to inform Glastonbury residents about their rights and introduce them to the HRC.

8. There were no new business.

9. The next meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2019 at 6 p.m. at the Riverfront Community Center.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.