

Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Present: David O'Connor, Leslie Ohta, Isabel Rolfe, Sherri Tanguay, and Neil Griffin.

1. Approval of Minutes December 6, 2022

The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Committee Reports:

a. Affirmative Action/Recruitment Report - Sherri Tanguay

Ms. Tanguay presented the Affirmative Action/Recruitment report. There was a brief discussion on the application numbers and recruitment process. Ms. Tanguay noted that the Town has been using the Paycom system for about a year and they are in the process of completing the affirmative action information. Ms. Tanguay presented the report on the 33 newly hired individuals. She noted that the 5 newly hired police dispatchers include 3 females and a mix of minority and white hires. Mr. O'Connor asked if the newly hired Outreach Clinician and Mental Health Clinician would be part of Ms. LaCapra's Youth and Family Services department. Ms. Tanguay replied yes. Several Commission members remarked that it is great that those vacancies were filled.

b. Human Services Report – No report was presented as Lori LaCapra, Director of Youth and Family Services, was not in attendance.

3. Martin Luther King Report - David O'Connor

Mr. O'Connor briefed the Commission on the new leadership and new direction of the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative. He noted that a social justice themed poetry reading event is planned for the end of April. Mr. O'Connor added that the event format has not been determined and will either be in person or virtual.

4. Housing Authority Report – Neil Griffin, Director, Housing Authority

Mr. Griffin presented an updated report. He noted that the number of housing choice vouchers increased from 33 to 37, and added that, due to rising costs and limited funding, they can only issue 26 at the present time. Mr. Griffin briefed the Commission on the plans to reposition the Welles Village property. He noted that once the plans are finalized and approved, they will engage with the residents informing them of the conversion. Mr. Griffin explained that the tenants will retain their rights and added that stronger tenant protections will also be in place. He

noted that redeveloping the property would result in a tremendous increase in revenue and sustainability. Mr. Griffin noted that Welles Village comprises of 5 acres and the plan is to relocate residents to new units. He remarked that he hopes that the number of units will increase. There was a brief discussion on the project developers.

5. Old business - None

6. New business

Mr. O'Connor asked Ms. Ohta to update the Commission on the mural. Ms. Ohta noted that the issue became political and added that everything has to be approved by the Town Council, including the location and theme of the mural. She noted that the Town Manger has to sign the contract. Ms. Ohta explained that there would be no cost and liability to the Town and added that RiseUp assumes all liability and responsibility for the maintenance of the mural for 5 years. She noted that an anti-graffiti coating will be put on the mural. Ms. Ohta explained that, after 5 years, the mural can be whitewashed. Ms. Ohta reported that she explained to the Town Council that the mural is not political and brought up the point that the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative was approved by the Town Council over 20 years ago. She also explained to the Town Council that the ABC house is another example of Glastonbury's commitment to equity, racial diversity and fairness, which is not a political issue. Mr. O'Connor noted that it sounds like it will be a lengthy process. There was a brief discussion on the possible mural locations, including the High School, in case other locations in Town are not feasible.

Ms. Tanguay will send the Commissioners the invitation to the Town Manager's retirement celebration scheduled to be held at the Boat House on March 30, 2023.

There was a brief discussion on the housing waitlist. Mr. Griffin noted that, presently, there are about 1,000 people on the waitlist. The Commission briefly discussed the affordable housing shortage.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 6, 2023.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadya Yuskaev
Recording Secretary