

Human Relations Commission
Meeting #2021-09
October 25, 2021 - 5 p.m.

A meeting of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) was held via Zoom and in-person on Monday, October 25, 2021, at 5 p.m.

Chair Hightower called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. In attendance were Chair Faith Hightower, Vice-Chair Shannon Cunningham, Secretary Alissa Carpenter, Member Scott Badami and alternate member Larry Maltin. Also in attendance were Supervisors Joyce Keller and Jeffrey Campolongo, Township Manager Roman M. Pronczak, P.E., Assistant Township Manager David J. Mrochko, and IT Director Nicole Leininger. There were no members of the public in attendance.

A motion was made by Mr. Badami, duly seconded by Ms. Cunningham to approve the minutes of September 27, 2021. There were no comments or questions. Chair Hightower called for a roll-call vote: Vice-Chair Cunningham, aye; Mr. Badami, aye; Ms. Carpenter, aye; and Chair Hightower also voted in favor. The motion carried.

Chair Hightower moved on to old business and subcommittee reports, beginning with the document committee. Secretary Carpenter updated the members, showing the Complaint Submission Form, an editable form based on what Lower Merion Township has. She asked if anyone had suggestions or comments. Supervisor Campolongo thought it might be appropriate to add questions noting if a person requires an ADA accommodation based on a disability. It will be added as a checkbox. Discussion additionally centered on translation of the form into different languages, as well as interpretation services for someone who might need it. These will be researched. Vice-Chair Cunningham also addressed the means of submission to conform with the ordinance, as well as to whom the form should be directed.

Chair Hightower then asked Vice-Chair Cunningham to update the group on the website committee actions. Vice-Chair Cunningham noted that she completed Phase 1, and Mr. Badami is now working on Phase 2. Mr. Badami agreed that he is, although it is not yet ready for discussion, but will be by next meeting.

Chair Hightower updated the group on the outreach committee. They are still following up after the success with the community festival. She met some people from the New York Life Insurance Company who may be able to do

something with the HRC. They are going to try to set something up for the week of November 12th via Zoom. She touched base with Anne Frank from the library. Bobbi Foster is the new part-time Outreach Coordinator for the library, and we will be setting up a meeting with her to discuss the grant they received for equity and inclusion. The Rotary Club will be including the HRC at an upcoming meeting, possibly November, for their diversity and inclusion meeting. Chair Hightower is waiting to hear. Mr. Maltin has an appointment to speak with the editors of Blue Bell's Finest, who will be writing an article about the Whitpain HRC. They develop articles on "making a difference" based on a resident, although he will not be the focus. Prior to publication, the members will have a chance to review the draft. He added that we need to start developing a strategy to target, in 2022, organizations and groups we want to reach and present our message.

A brief discussion was held among the group regarding the mediation training. It is anticipated that it will begin early in the new year. In addition, Mr. Badami offered fair housing training that he is willing to lead.

Chair Hightower then brought up old business, including ordinance updates, budget updates and approvals for commission members. She asked Mr. Pronczak to respond. Mr. Pronczak said the solicitor's office is working on the updates to the ordinance with the HRC recommendations. We do not yet have the draft ordinance. When it is received, it will be presented to the Board of Supervisors with a request for an authorization to advertise. As far as the budget, we are working on the budget presentation with the first presentation scheduled to be held November 3rd. The Supervisors will take action on appointments at the November meeting. Supervisor Campolongo noted that when the amendment to the ordinance moves forward, the Power Point should be updated to include the additional classes.

Chair Hightower mentioned that the next meeting is November 22nd at 5 p.m. She asked the members if quarterly meetings should begin in 2022. Vice-Chair Cunningham said if the complaint form is updated and approved at the November meeting, quarterly meetings could begin in the coming year, or even every other month. Mr. Maltin does not want to see meetings quarterly while the HRC is still in its learning stage. Ms. Carpenter added that the HRC needs to know what has to be done by the November meeting in order to move toward quarterly meetings. Changes to the form were further discussed.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Cunningham, seconded by Mr. Badami to approve the suggested changes to the complaint form and add it to the website. Chair Hightower took a roll-call vote: Ms. Carpenter, aye; Mr. Badami, aye; Vice-Chair Cunningham, aye and Chair Hightower also voted in favor. The motion carried.

Chair Hightower announced that today is Vice-Chair Cunningham's last official meeting. She thanked her for all her help, support and clarity, and invited her back anytime to volunteer or at least visit with the group. Vice-Chair Cunningham said it has been a privilege to work with the HRC. She will be attending as a member of the public. Mr. Badami also thanked her for all she has done with the HRC.

Chair Hightower asked if anyone had any further comments. There were none. She asked if there is any public comment. There was none. She mentioned that East Norriton is having training by the PA HRC and this HRC is welcome to attend if they wish. Mr. Maltin asked if the approved complaint form can be highlighted in the Wire when it is complete. Mr. Mrochko said he will work on that. He asked Ms. Carpenter to get it to him whenever it is ready.

Chair Hightower thanked everyone for their participation. Upon motion by Vice-Chair Cunningham, seconded by Ms. Carpenter, the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alissa Carpenter", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Alissa Carpenter
Secretary