

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA**

Monday, July 11, 2022 at 5:00 PM  
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

- This meeting will be conducted in person and by using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The public may view the meeting online at [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) and click on “Join A Meeting” enter Meeting ID 867 3299 3658
- To listen to the meeting, please dial (646) 876-9923 and when prompted enter Meeting ID 867 3299 3658
- If you encounter issues accessing this meeting, please call (603) 757-1835 during the meeting

Members:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Janis Manwaring  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh  
Dr. Shaun Filiault  
Marti Fiske  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Councilor Catherine Workman

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Alternates:

Ritu Budakoti  
Heidi Schwieger

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
  - a. May 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - b. May 9<sup>th</sup>
  - c. May 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - d. June 6<sup>th</sup>
3. Finance Report
4. Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Coalition Updates
5. Acceptance of Committee Event Reports
6. Community Outreach
7. Racial Justice and Community Safety Report
8. New Business
9. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 at 5:00 PM

*“In our efforts to create a more equal and just society, we move forward with the firm intention to value the voices, opinions, and experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with the awareness and humility that the statements and decisions we make will have a different impact for those with different life experiences.”*

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

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5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, May 2, 2022

5:00 PM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Dr. Shaun Filaault, Vice Chair (from 5:15 PM,  
to 5:52 PM, via Zoom)  
Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Dottie Morris (arrived at 5:05 PM)  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh (arrived at 5:08 PM)  
Hunter Kirschner  
Councilor Catherine Workman (arrived at 5:15  
PM, via Zoom)  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson (arrived at 5:04 PM)  
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate  
Heidi Schwieger, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

Members Not Present:

Marti Fiske

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10 1) Welcome and Call to Order  
11

12 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. Roll call was conducted.  
13 Members from Keene Pride introduced themselves, as did a person from the Keene Sentinel.  
14 Ms. Manwaring asked if anyone was present via Zoom. Mr. Bohannon replied not yet, other  
15 than the Minute-taker.  
16

17 2) Approval of April 4, 2022 Meeting Minutes  
18

19 Ms. Schwieger made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 4, 2022. Ms. Budakoti  
20 seconded the motion.  
21

22 Daniel Aronson arrived at 5:04 PM and introduced himself. Dr. Dottie Morris arrived at 5:05  
23 PM and introduced herself.  
24

HRC Meeting Minutes  
May 2, 2022

25 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called for a vote on the motion, which passed with a vote of 6-1. Ms.  
26 Manwaring stated that she abstains. Mr. Bohannon asked why. Ms. Manwaring replied that she  
27 thought they were going to talk about the minutes first. Mr. Bohannon replied that she cannot  
28 abstain. Ms. Manwaring replied that she then votes against the minutes.

29  
30 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she understands that Keene Pride had concerns about what  
31 was said [at the April meeting].

32  
33 Adam Toepfer, Keene Pride President, stated that he and others from Keene Pride wanted to  
34 present a report, and go over some misrepresentations. He distributed copies to HRC members  
35 and asked Susan MacNeil to speak.

36  
37 Susan MacNeil, Board member of Keene Pride, 95 Rockingham St., Bellows Falls, VT, stated  
38 that Keene Pride was happy that this was taken up at the April meeting of the HRC, but when  
39 they saw the minutes, they thought perhaps some assumptions became fact and were dismayed.

40  
41 Dr. Mohammed Saleh arrived at 5:08 PM and introduced himself.

42  
43 Ms. MacNeil continued that Keene Pride came up with a statement that addresses some of the  
44 issues. It is too long to read into the record in its entirety, but she will share some highlights.  
45 She read:

46  
47 *“Keene Pride, a NH non-profit organization, would like to go on record to address the*  
48 *misinformation regarding our organization recorded in the Keene HRC’s meeting minutes of*  
49 *April 4, 2022. Keene Pride expresses profound gratitude to the City of Keene Planning,*  
50 *Licenses, and Development Committee for their unanimous recommendation of our downtown*  
51 *Keene license to hold a block party on Sunday, September 18, 2022. Keene Pride was thrilled to*  
52 *receive the unanimous support from the City Council to approve the block party application and*  
53 *event, which is free and open to the public. Keene Pride’s vision for the block party was never*  
54 *alcohol-oriented. We have not applied, nor do we intend to apply, for a liquor license for the*  
55 *block party or any of the public events that will occur between September 11 and September 18.”*

56  
57 Ms. MacNeil continued that item #4 addresses an issue that was in the meeting minutes about  
58 why September. It is essentially to have as many people as possible, and to help local businesses  
59 kick off a robust 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Pride events held throughout the country bring in a huge amount of  
60 revenue to the organizations and businesses in the area. There was an assumption that somehow  
61 Keene Pride does not have an understanding or awareness of the cultural and historical issues  
62 surrounding the Pride movement, the Stonewall uprising. They certainly do. The Board has a  
63 depth of information, which is spelled out in the document. The idea of October was brought up,  
64 as a month for the gay community to recognize Pride, and October 10 is National Coming Out  
65 Day. If the HRC wants to do anything, they applaud that. There was an impression that  
66 somehow Keene Pride was not in touch with local businesses or other local organizations, but in  
67 fact, they are. They have put a lot in place already. They are in touch with the Rotary Club

68 about banners for downtown and have the support of the Chamber, faith communities, non-profit  
69 organizations, and local businesses. Their intention has always been to keep the focus local and  
70 regional. They have already received some financial commitments from a couple businesses in  
71 the city, including C&S, Brown Computer Solutions, and Fenton Family Dealership. They are  
72 applying for grants to national organizations as well as the NH Charitable Fund. They have  
73 confirmed that John Scagliotti, VT filmmaker of Before Stonewall and After Stonewall, is on  
74 board and supportive of being involved. They are also on Senator Jeanne Shaheen's calendar for  
75 an appearance at the block party on September 19 and her liaison for civil and gay rights is  
76 pleased that this is happening. They have local musical performers booked for three hours at  
77 Railroad Square. Keene Pride has reached out to the LGBTQ club at Keene High School, and  
78 they will be involved. There will be many family events for folks who attend the block party.  
79 They booked the Colonial Theatre's showroom on five different nights. They have an exciting  
80 event already with the MDEIB and are in touch with all those folks. Keene Pride will focus on  
81 educating the public, which will include a broad array of speakers and programming. They are  
82 working with the local historical societies, too. They plan to offer year-round programming and  
83 community building for the local queer community.

84

85 Ms. MacNeil continued that Keene Pride was a little offended when they read the meeting  
86 minutes, because [what was said in the minutes] was never their intention, and they wanted to set  
87 the record straight, because they are so excited and thrilled by the cooperation of the City.

88

89 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if the HRC wants to vote to accept the meeting minutes with the  
90 addendum of the document from Keene Pride. She asked if they can do that. Mr. Bohannon  
91 replied yes. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked for a motion.

92

93 Ms. Manwaring made a motion to [accept the April 4, 2022 meeting minutes with the addendum  
94 of the document from Keene Pride]. Dr. Morris seconded the motion, which passed by  
95 unanimous vote.

96

97 HRC members thanked Keene Pride for coming. Mr. Bohannon thanked the Keene Pride  
98 members for coming to speak to the HRC and making the clarifications and bringing this  
99 document forward so the HRC has time to review it and continue the dialogue with Keene Pride.  
100 Ms. MacNeil replied that Keene Pride would love to work with the HRC.

101

102 Councilor Catherine Workman arrived at 5:15 PM.

103

### 104 3) **Finance Report**

105

106 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the Finance Report is the same as last month. She  
107 continued that she thinks that going forward, the HRC's finances will need to be discussed in  
108 some depth, due to the number of events. Unfortunately for the chairs of working groups for  
109 events, they will need to start making budgeting part of the process in a more formal way. She  
110 asked if anyone had questions. Hearing none, she moved on in the agenda.

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**4) Racial Justice and Community Safety Report**  
**A) Approval of April 12, 2022 Meeting minutes**

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC met on April 12 for two hours and made a significant amount of progress regarding the Racial Justice and Community Safety (RJCS) Report. She continued that the meeting minutes are in the agenda packet.

Ms. Manwaring made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from April 12, 2022. Mr. Kirschner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the next meeting regarding the RJCS Report is May 9, from 6:30 to 8:30. She appreciates the HRC members putting the time into this.

**5) Committee Programs for 2022**  
**A) MLK Day – January 17**

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that they do not immediately need to start thinking about next year, but they should keep this on the radar.

Ms. Manwaring stated that she wants it on the record, as a reminder to the HRC, that they consider asking the Historical Society and Jenna Carroll to present her research on Black people in the area. She continued that about 14 people are working on that. It is too soon to consider this for Juneteenth, but by January, Ms. Carroll could have some excellent information.

**B) Holi Festival – Not taking place 2022**

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Holi Festival is not taking place this year.

**C) Pride Month – October**

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked Dr. Filiault or Mr. Kirschner to speak. Mr. Kirschner stated that he is not sure that he has anything to say at the moment, given what Keene Pride just shared with the HRC. He continued that he and Dr. Filiault need some time to discuss where they are at.

**D) Juneteenth – June 19**

Ms. Manwaring stated that things are coming along well. She continued that the event will be Saturday, June 18, since June 19 is Father's Day. They are working on the programming. The flyer is wonderful. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will make sure he sends it out to everyone, if he has not already done so. Ms. Manwaring stated that she and Ms. Schwieger are working on two tables, and the Library will have a table. One table will be on voting.

154 Ms. Schwieger stated that the Jonathan Daniels Center (JDC) will have its own presence at the  
155 event, but part of what they want to take on is enlisting the support of the NH League of Women  
156 Voters, to do something around voting rights. They also want to create a community  
157 engagement opportunity, a reflection with prompts to invite responses, which people can share  
158 publicly or take away with them, about their own activism and engagement. They are meeting  
159 after tonight's HRC meeting to talk more about it. The JDC will collaborate with the HRC on  
160 this.

161  
162 Ms. Manwaring stated that she was looking up voter suppression and how people are kept from  
163 voting, and on the ACLU website, three states were mentioned repeatedly, including New  
164 Hampshire. Education is needed, about how voter suppression happens.

165  
166 Ms. Budakoti stated that the HRC previously talked about collaborating with other organizations  
167 doing similar things [for Juneteenth]. She asked what happened with that. Mr. Bohannon  
168 replied that the conversation was had, and attempt was made to have one event this year, and for  
169 certain reasons the HRC decided not to do that and to have their own event. He continued that it  
170 would be challenging to get people to attend and help with a Juneteenth event if it was the same  
171 day as Father's Day. Also, the HRC wanted the event be downtown, and to have different  
172 messaging [from the YMCA's focus on health], because the HRC already did that with the MLK  
173 Day event. Those are reasons why the HRC wanted to do its own Juneteenth event this year, but  
174 they would be open to considering collaboration next year.

175  
176 **E) Keene International Festival – September 24**

177  
178 Ms. Budakoti stated that they have gained some momentum in the planning for this, and Mr.  
179 Bohannon is on the planning committee. She continued that she does not know how they are  
180 doing financially, but they are working on getting sponsors and putting things together, like the  
181 arts and crafts from places around the world. In addition, they are working closely with the  
182 Colonial to bring a multigenerational act, which will be a key highlight. Other performers from  
183 the local community will come in and rock the event. The planning has good momentum but  
184 they are still seeking volunteers, planning group members, and donors. Donations would be very  
185 helpful, because it all goes back into the community, and this is a wonderful event that brings the  
186 community together.

187  
188 **F) Indigenous People Day – October 10**

189  
190 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Ms. Fiske is [leading this working group] but she is not  
191 present, so she will table this until next month.

192  
193 **6) New, Other Business**

194  
195 James Rinker of 34 Cottage St., Digital Community Engagement Journalist from the Keene  
196 Sentinel, stated that he has been in this role since January, and a big part of the role is engaging

197 with the community, especially parts of the community that are under-served by reporting and  
198 the work of the Sentinel. He is here on behalf of the Sentinel and interested in an open  
199 discussion with the HRC on how to best connect with people who are under-served by the  
200 community and give a baseline of what the Sentinel is interested in doing and what they have  
201 already started. He sees that the HRC is quite events-based and puts forth initiatives.  
202 [Regarding] a way to get the news out about the committee meetings, he saw in the meeting  
203 minutes that someone described the HRC as “a well-kept secret.” He wants to increase the  
204 region’s awareness of this work. He partners with the non-profit Trusting News, which partners  
205 with newsrooms around the nation. They are auditing the Sentinel’s opinions content to make it  
206 more accessible to those who have little to no media literacy and understanding of what goes into  
207 a newspaper, and making the Sentinel’s reporting practices clearer. Recently the Sentinel was  
208 recognized for their “Better Judgement” series, a revision of how they report on crime in the  
209 Monadnock region, in part to reduce the stigma around people who commit crimes. The Sentinel  
210 also hired him, in a dedicated role with community engagement and outreach, to put into action  
211 new ways to make an impact. He grew up in this region and has seen the impact local journalism  
212 can have. He is part of the audience engagement committee, part of which is doing outreach,  
213 similar to what the HRC does, identifying opportunities for the Sentinel to appear in the public  
214 eye and connect with readers and do additional outreach with the community. He is here to open  
215 the discussion and hear from the HRC about what he/the Sentinel can do, to open those doors.  
216

217 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos thanked Mr. Rinker for this opportunity. She continued that the HRC  
218 probably needs to mull a bit about what the best way would be for them to engage with him.  
219 That will be the HRC’s homework assignment for this month. Dr. Morris suggested that the  
220 HRC Chair write a column. Mr. Rinker replied that he can give the HRC contact information for  
221 [the person in charge of the] opinions content, because he does not handle that. He is not on the  
222 editorial staff. He could be the HRC’s liaison with the Sentinel for after they do their homework  
223 with mulling and planning and discussing what the HRC is interested in. Mr. Bohannon replied  
224 that there is definitely opportunity here, but they need time to process this. He continued that the  
225 HRC’s next agenda could include this conversation and Mr. Rinker is welcome at that meeting.  
226

227 Ms. Budakoti stated that press releases right before [HRC] events would be very helpful. Mr.  
228 Rinker replied that one of his goals is to make the work being done in the community more well  
229 known. The Sentinel is currently redesigning their website, to be more accessible, more  
230 applicable, and more easily navigated, and hopefully it will include a new community events  
231 calendar. He saw this HRC meeting on the Sentinel’s calendar. A second goal of the audience  
232 engagement team that he is part of is attending events. They will do outreach for the Keene  
233 International Festival as well as various events in the region. Letting people know in advance  
234 that the Sentinel will be at these events means people will be aware that they can talk to Sentinel  
235 staff. The third goal is the creation of something he brought up, like transparency work – “coffee  
236 with a reporter” is in the works, and creating ways for people to connect with people who are  
237 generating the news, to ask open, honest questions. The Sentinel is still working on clarifying  
238 where people can send things, because there are several avenues that go to several people for  
239 different things. They are working on streamlining where people can send news versus letters

240 versus events. He is happy to do his homework and get a list of those for next month's HRC  
241 meeting.

242  
243 Dr. Saleh stated that he may have missed it, but was a link to the spreadsheet that captures all the  
244 HRC recommendations shared with the committee? Mr. Bohannon replied that he thought he  
245 shared it at the last meeting, but can share it again. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that he  
246 shared the blank version, but not the output from the April 12 meeting. Mr. Bohannon replied  
247 that he has not sent that out yet. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will send what  
248 he has, and the HRC can refine it.

249  
250 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is looking to change the structure of the HRC meetings,  
251 and perhaps change the focus of the HRC. She continued that they spend a lot of time going  
252 through updates on events, which is not necessarily the best use of their time. She would like the  
253 chairs of the working groups to submit written updates to be included in the [agenda packet]. If  
254 a working group needs input from the HRC about something, they can ask for time on the  
255 agenda; otherwise, it will be up to the HRC members to read the notes. If HRC members have  
256 questions about the events or working groups, they can ask during "new business."

257  
258 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos continued that a few items that did not make it onto today's agenda  
259 will be on the agenda going forward. One is liaising with the Monadnock Diversity, Equity,  
260 Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB). Monthly, Dr. Morris and Councilor Workman  
261 will give the HRC insight into what is happening with the MDEIB and hopefully share with the  
262 MDEIB about the HRC, too.

263  
264 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos continued that the HRC had started a conversation about finding more  
265 concrete ways to impact the lives of Keene citizens, and that is her hope for the HRC's direction.  
266 The events are important and part of their charter, but they can do more, in terms of being a point  
267 of access for the community. They can examine the ways people interact with the City and how  
268 to make that more inclusive. As the HRC has discussed before, it is not just about race and  
269 LGBT issues, but also mental health and how people with mental health concerns are able to  
270 interact with the City and be heard, housing, access issues in the general, and the broader  
271 interpretation of "human rights." She asked for feedback. She is open to thoughts on what this  
272 can look like.

273  
274 Dr. Saleh stated that he agrees with looking at the broader interpretation of "human rights." He  
275 wonders how they would go about that. Is there any other entity in the City government that is  
276 tracking the needs and concerns of citizens, or should the HRC ask other organizations in the city  
277 what they see as the issues and needs? Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that she does not think  
278 the City is tracking this, and that is where the HRC can help. If the HRC is not equipped to do  
279 the work themselves, which is an unanswered question, they can figure out how to create a  
280 structure to collect and consider that information. Identifying the community agencies and  
281 organizations connected with populations who struggle to access community services and vitality  
282 would be a good place to start. Discussion continued about the organizations.



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Mr. Kirschner stated that he is thinking about [Christina “Teeny” Wold’s] communication to the HRC [about mental health], and about creating avenues for folks to propose areas of concern/issues for the HRC to attend to. He is thinking about multiple modalities, going right to the people, in addition to the agencies that serve them.

Mr. Aronson stated that this dovetails with a discussion from the April 12 meeting about something like an ombudsperson that could be a central address for addressing concerns. He wonders if they could also use the Sentinel to get the word out that if people have concerns they would like the City to be addressing, in the realm of human rights, that this would be an appropriate place to bring them. They would have to be vetted and he does not know what the protocol is for that. That invitation would need to be crafted in a way that is appropriate for the HRC. Dr. Morris replied yes, it would be important to map out the process and determine who would be accountable. Dr. Saleh replied that the HRC probably does not have the bandwidth to address all the issues themselves, but could gather data and identify the collective needs of the community and try to come up with a plan.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that one hour a month is not enough. She continued that she does not know what the correct frequency and length of meetings are, or if they could do work on an ad hoc basis, which sounds like a lot of meetings. One hour a month is not enough, however, for what could be a massive endeavor. She would like to leave everyone with this germ of an idea today. HRC members already have a homework assignment to think about the Sentinel and how to use that opportunity. Another homework assignment is to think about what the HRC’s work should be, and what the structure should look like, which is a massive question. She wishes they could bounce ideas off each other, but unfortunately, they cannot, due to the rules of not creating a quorum outside of meetings. This will take a lot of discussion and brainstorming. She asked if next month’s meeting should be longer, or if they should set up a separate meeting to discuss this, or if it is premature. Others replied that they can talk about it at the HRC’s June meeting, since they already have a separate meeting in a week to discuss the RJCS Report. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos agreed and suggested the June meeting be two hours.

Ms. Budakoti stated that going forward, they should think about what the HRC’s role is in the City, what their strengths are, and what areas they can work within. She continued that if they just ask the community, “What are your concerns?”, there could be hundreds, but they are not all ones the HRC can help with. It would help if the HRC could lay out certain areas they can help with, and be very specific with people about what the HRC can and cannot do, and what resources they do and do not have. She asks the HRC members to do this internal reflection, so they have clarity on this before asking the community what their concerns are. The response from the community might help the HRC determine what to focus on and how much time to spend – for example, if many people speak of concerns of a particular topic, the HRC knows to focus there to help the community and how to allocate their time and resources.

325 Discussion ensued about the logistics of a two-hour meeting next month. Mr. Bohannon stated  
326 that they can find a way, if that is what they want. He continued that knowing the history of this  
327 committee, meetings typically are less frequent in the summer, with August being a month off.  
328 The HRC can meet in August if they want, but he would have another staff member fill in for  
329 him that month. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they can discuss schedule changes in  
330 general – maybe the first Monday of the month does not end up being the best meeting time.

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332 Dr. Saleh asked, for clarification, if the plan is to meet for two hours in June, and that the main  
333 discussion will be on exploring the broader scope of the committee, but they are not agreeing –  
334 or not *yet* agreeing – to have every meeting be two hours long. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
335 replied that is correct. She continued that however, the looming “threat” is that moving forward,  
336 the HRC will need to devote more than one hour per month to its work. Dr. Saleh replied that he  
337 personally would rather have the monthly meetings run longer, instead of adding another day to  
338 the calendar. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they will need to figure it all out. Mr.  
339 Bohannon stated that some City committees do not specify an ending time for each meeting, but  
340 rather, meet for as long as each agenda takes; there are different ways to do it. Discussion  
341 continued.

342  
343 Dr. Morris stated that someone asked what the HRC’s purpose as a group is. Are they an  
344 advisory group? They need to clarify that in their own heads. Ms. Manwaring replied that when  
345 this group was formed, there was discussion about whether it would be a “committee” or a  
346 “commission,” the latter of which has statutory rules. Mr. Bohannon replied that it stays as a  
347 committee. Discussion continued about the difference. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if the  
348 HRC could get a quick explanation of “commission” vs. “committee,” via email. Mr. Bohannon  
349 replied that the City’s only commission is the Conservation Commission, which has statutory  
350 responsibilities, along with the Planning Board and [Zoning Board of Adjustment]. All the other  
351 City bodies are committees. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that the other side of being a  
352 committee and not having the statutory requirements they must follow is that there are powers  
353 they are not authorized to use, which they need to be conscious of as they have this conversation.  
354 Mr. Bohannon replied yes, ultimately, the City Council has the authority.

355  
356 Dr. Saleh stated that he would like clarification on what happens to recommendations that  
357 committees make. He continued that for example, the HRC created a draft statement to be read  
358 aloud [before City committee meetings], and the Mayor did not like it so it was put aside. They  
359 do not want to go through significant effort only to be pushed aside. Is there any established  
360 protocol for that? What happens next? Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that that was one of  
361 the items to put back on the agenda – reconsidering the language of the draft statement, and  
362 having a dialogue with the Mayor about how they can address his concerns. Ms. Manwaring  
363 replied that at the time, the Mayor said he did not feel he could ask the chairs of every public  
364 body to read a statement at the beginning of each meeting, and it was more about that than the  
365 specific language in the statement. Discussion continued. Dr. Saleh asked what the established  
366 process is for the HRC’s recommendations. For example, do they have to go to the Mayor first?  
367 Ms. Manwaring replied that they could write a request to the City Council, and the City Council

368 would assign the HRC's request to a City Council committee, and the HRC would go to that  
369 committee meeting and talk about it. That committee would make a recommendation to the City  
370 Council, and the City Council would vote on it. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that this  
371 conversation will be on next month's agenda.

372

373 Dr. Morris stated that the City Attorney would have answers to many of the HRC's questions.  
374 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they should consider asking the City Attorney to attend  
375 the June meeting. She continued that maybe an email from him would be enough. Mr.  
376 Bohannon replied that he will try email. He continued that the City has a new Assistant City  
377 Attorney, also; maybe she could help with this.

378

379 **7) Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, June 6, 2022 at 5:00 PM**

380

381 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 6:05 PM.

382

383 Respectfully submitted by,  
384 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

385

386 Reviewed and edited by,  
387 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

3  
4  
5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, May 9, 2022

5:00 PM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Dr. Shaun Filiault, Vice Chair  
Councilor Catherine Workman  
Marti Fiske  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Hunter Kirschner (arrived at 7:00 PM)  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Heidi Schwieger, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

Members Not Present:

Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh  
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate

8  
9  
10 **1) Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report**

11  
12 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM. She stated that at the previous  
13 meeting about the RJCS Report, the HRC left off at recommendation 4.B.

14  
15 ***4.B. It is recommended that the City and Keene employers regularly conduct diversity, equity***  
16 ***and inclusion training for employees that fosters an open and welcoming workplace culture***  
17 ***for all people.***

18  
19 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the conversation was around making a list of free trainings  
20 and working with the City's HR Department. She thinks that Mr. Bohannon took an action.  
21 This one is covered for now. Her intention is for the group to go through all of the items and  
22 then circle back around and then do the next level of development and status check and  
23 discussion.  
24

25 An HRC member asked if the terms “racial justice” and “DEI” (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)  
26 are used interchangeably. Discussion ensued about how DEI is a broader umbrella term that  
27 encompasses and assists with racial justice issues.

28

29 ***4.C. It is recommended that the City and Keene employers review employee recruitment,***  
30 ***retention, pay and promotion policies to achieve improved diversity and equity amongst***  
31 ***applicants and throughout organizational personnel at all levels.***

32

33 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she thinks this can go along with the inclusion training, as  
34 something the HRC discusses with the HR Department. Mr. Bohannon stated that he reached  
35 out to HR this week. He continued that the provider of the City’s EAP (Employee Assistance  
36 Program) used to provide three on-site trainings per year, and he will keep pursuing that avenue.  
37 The trainings covered these sort of things. He thinks the City changed EAP providers since then,  
38 which was about 2010, and he is waiting for confirmation. HRC members noted that 4.C. is  
39 talking about an audit of policies, more than employee training.

40

41 Mr. Bohannon stated that he spoke with Rebecca Landry (IT Director/Assistant City Manager)  
42 today. There is the Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB),  
43 and also, the Chamber of Commerce has formed a group focused on DEI, and they have done  
44 quite a bit of work. He and Ms. Landry were saying, “Okay, the meeting of the minds is going to  
45 happen, so that three groups are not going down the same parallel path.” Those three groups are  
46 the City (HRC), the YMCA (MDEIB), and the Chamber. Discussion ensued about working  
47 together, working “smarter, not harder,” and efficiency.

48

49 Dr. Filiault stated that this might be an area to reach out to the City Attorney about, because  
50 when you are talking about recruitment, pay, retention, and promotion, with regards to diversity  
51 and equity, you begin to quickly run up against federal law. Trying to increase diversity and  
52 equity in hiring [needs to follow] federal law. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that that is an  
53 important caveat, but they can still do a lot within the boundaries of federal law. Dr. Filiault  
54 replied yes, once they clearly understand what the boundaries are, which the HR Department and  
55 the City Attorney can advise on. Discussion ensued. Dr. Morris spoke about how recruitment  
56 efforts can include better/more strategic advertising, to maximize the pools of candidates. Mr.  
57 Bohannon stated that he will bring this issue forward at his upcoming meeting with the City  
58 Manager and City Attorney.

59

60 Ms. Fiske noted that 4.C. references the City “and Keene employers,” so she wonders if the  
61 Chamber’s DEI group and the MDEIB are focusing on those Keene employers, and the HRC can  
62 only focus on the City. Others agreed. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they would have  
63 to verify this, and to her it is part of the conversation – how do they divvy this up, and share the  
64 responsibility in reporting? Discussion ensued. Dr. Morris spoke of Keene State College  
65 (KSC)’s experiences hiring people who come with a “trailing spouse” who also needs a job, and  
66 KSC’s desire to create a network within a 35-40 mile radius where people could live in Keene or  
67 near it and their spouse could find a job. If HR people could come together to create that

68 network, within federal guidelines, it would help. Employers recruiting candidates could then  
69 have a list of places where candidates' spouses could apply for jobs.

70

71 Mr. Aronson stated that the wording of 4.C. asks for a review of policies; it is not yet about  
72 proposing solutions. It is about identifying strengths and weaknesses. The question is, what are  
73 they focusing on? And if the HRC is focusing on just the City, the question is what that review  
74 would look like and who would do it. An outside auditor? Ms. Fiske stated that she is a City  
75 employee who recently tried hard to hire for an upper level position, and the hard part was  
76 recruitment. She thinks the City's pay and promotion policies are solid. All (departments) deal  
77 with retention issues. But recruitment is hard. She did not know where to advertise. She tried,  
78 for example, the Black caucus of the American Library Association and did not get any potential  
79 applicants from that advertisement and it doubled her budget. Something like what Dr. Morris is  
80 suggesting would be more valuable, in her opinion. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she  
81 wonders if other cities have good models of success for recruitment. Dr. Morris replied that the  
82 Town of Brattleboro put something in place about two years ago, and did some really intentional  
83 things to broaden their applicant pool, and now have a Puerto Rican HR Director, an African  
84 American female Police Chief, and another person of color (in another job), all from continuing  
85 to broaden the pool. They could talk with the HR Director about how they have done this.  
86 Councilor Workman noted that the new Town Manager in Brattleboro is also a person of color.  
87 Discussion continued.

88

89 An HRC member stated that she is unclear whether it is the HRC's job to help identify ways to  
90 do this review. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that is a good question, whether it is the  
91 HRC's job to call for the need, and allow the HR Department to do its own audit or determine  
92 what that looks like, and the HRC could serve as a resource and, for example, suggest that the  
93 Keene HR Department talk with the Brattleboro HR folks. Councilor Workman replied or  
94 asking the members of the Chamber of Commerce to start there, so each of the Keene members  
95 take a pledge to do their own internal audit, or something like that, and review of their policies.  
96 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that it could be finding an auditor instead. Maybe the  
97 Chamber could find someone who is willing to do the audit for all of the members. It might be  
98 more cost effective that way. What the HRC's responsibility is in all of this is a good question,  
99 and it might be a question for the next round.

100

101 ***4.D. It is recommended that the City and Keene employers expand and regularly provide***  
102 ***internship positions that specifically attract underrepresented populations and create career***  
103 ***opportunities.***

104

105 Ms. Fiske stated that this came up in a DEI training she did recently. A group of lawyers in MA  
106 pooled their resources and created three or four intern spots for six months, and advertised in one  
107 of the major metro areas for these internships that included pay high enough to cover a person's  
108 rent. Because of that, those three interns ended up finding jobs in the region. This was possible  
109 because of the lawyers' pooled resources as a group. The Library has an internship program paid  
110 for Friends of the Library, part-time, in the Makerspace. It is not something that would draw

111 applicants from afar. This is a funding issue. Interns have to be paid, and at a high enough wage  
112 to cover living expenses. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied yes, if the intern is from out of the  
113 area. She continued that students from KSC and other schools are already living here.  
114 Discussion ensued about are colleges and how diverse they are or are not. Chair Cunha-  
115 Vasconcelos stated that a question might be how to create internships that draw these people into  
116 the community to stay. Dr. Filiault stated that there is an exceptional pool of interns with KSC,  
117 Antioch, and River Valley Community College. He continued that the Mayor wanted to create  
118 internships like this, but that was derailed by the pandemic. The HRC could work to make it  
119 happen.

120  
121 Dr. Filiault continued that KSC's student body might be largely white but there is plenty of  
122 diversity of other types; they need to talk about diversities, plural, not diversity, singular. It is  
123 also about creating opportunities for students from the LGBTQI community, women, people of  
124 various religions, and so on and so forth, not just race. Discussion continued. Chair Cunha-  
125 Vasconcelos stated that she agrees that the HRC's focus/goal is diversities, plural, but they will  
126 keep having this issue, because the RJCS Report is around race, and this meeting is around this  
127 document. Dr. Morris replied that this document is what the HRC was charged to focus on. Dr.  
128 Filiault replied that the document still addresses multiple diversities and recognizes the problems  
129 of homophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, and so on and so forth. It focuses on race but has an eye  
130 on the other diversities. Sometimes race becomes most easily recognized because it is the most  
131 overt and visually recognizable, but there are less overt diversities that sometimes get swept  
132 under the rug. Dr. Morris replied that they should keep in mind that sometimes people of  
133 different races and ethnicities also are [LGBTQ, of various religions, women, and so on and so  
134 forth]. Dr. Filiault replied yes, there are multiple, overlapping diversities. Dr. Morris replied  
135 that oftentimes, people of color are ignored even within the groups [for people marginalized due  
136 to gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc]. For example, there is racism in the LGBTQ  
137 community, or other groups. Sometimes people forget, when they say, "We need to talk about  
138 this diversity and that diversity," that some people of color are also in those groups. It is a whole  
139 discussion. However, the Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee was charged by the  
140 Mayor to focus on race, so they did, and other [diversities] came up during the discussions when  
141 they had open forums, which is how they ended up in the report.

142  
143 Mr. Kirschner arrived at 7:00 PM and Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos briefly brought him up to speed  
144 on where they are at in the meeting. She stated that Ms. Fiske brought up that this can be a  
145 funding issue, regarding bringing people in from outside the community at a pay rate that allows  
146 them to actually pay rent. They talked about the idea of tapping into the local colleges and the  
147 topic of the diversities found there came up.

148  
149 Mr. Aronson stated that all of these keep talking about the City of Keene and Keene employers,  
150 so somehow they need to coordinate. He continued that he envisions the chairs of the different  
151 groups – that is, Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos from the HRC, the Chamber of Commerce's DEI  
152 person, and [Pierre Morton, Vice President, and Catherine Workman, Co-Chair] from the  
153 YMCA's MDEIB. He asked if Councilor Workman could bring this to the MDEIB, to get the

154 answer regarding Keene employers, while the HRC is focusing on the City's stuff. He asked if  
155 that makes sense. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied yes, but the HRC cannot move forward on  
156 that without the other groups' buy-in. It has not been a conversation yet. Mr. Aronson replied  
157 that he suggests Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos and Mr. Bohannon have a conversation with  
158 representatives from the other groups so they can coordinate all of this. Councilor Workman  
159 replied that that can be one of the HRC's recommendations [for 4.D.] She thinks it is a great  
160 idea; they need a lot more collaboration fleshing out of who is doing what, especially for the next  
161 round of this, so they can start delegating some of [the RJCS Report's recommendations] to  
162 those other committees.

163

164 Dr. Morris replied yes, because at the last MDEIB meeting, they were talking about doing an  
165 assessment, but the RJCS Committee *did* an assessment, and the data is available to others. The  
166 Governor's Council did an assessment, too. It has been done. Ms. Schwieger stated that taking  
167 ownership creates community investment. Mr. Bohannon stated that he feels like the RJCS  
168 Committee did a lot of work, meeting for a year, diving deep. He continued that the RJCS  
169 Committee brought in many people from the community and there was a lot of conversation, and  
170 they specifically went from meeting to meeting on specific topics, some of which he participated  
171 in. The report came out and got handed to the HRC when the HRC was in a time of transition  
172 and not quite ready for it, and then all of a sudden this other group formed and took off with it,  
173 and the HRC does not know [what that group is doing]. That has caused some confusion within  
174 the entire network. Thus, there needs to be a group discussion with Luca Paris, whoever the  
175 representative is from the Chamber of Commerce's group, Dan Smith from the YMCA, Pierre  
176 Morton, Councilor Workman as Co-Chair of the MDEIB, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos, and  
177 himself, all at the table, to get on the same highway. Councilor Workman replied yes, a year ago  
178 when this report came out, the MDEIB did not exist, and the Chamber of Commerce did not  
179 have a DEI Officer. Many of these positions had not yet been created in the community. Thus,  
180 the HRC was the most appropriate group to take this on, and the group charged with all of the  
181 work. Now that they are starting to see these other formations, groups, and positions within  
182 employers in the community, the HRC can start to disseminate some of this work and really get  
183 focused, so no one is duplicating the wheel.

184

185 Ms. Fiske stated that to shift the lens a bit, they can view this as an "embarrassment of riches."  
186 They can look what happened as a result of this report - they now have groups they did not have  
187 before. There is no need for anyone to complain about how the groups are not working together;  
188 instead, they can be glad that all of these organizations are doing this, and talk about working  
189 together. Ms. Schwieger replied that maybe one of the roles of the HRC is to weave the effort  
190 together, because they were charged with a very specific task. Others agreed and discussion  
191 continued.

192

193 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this conversation has ended up more general than just about  
194 internships, and she thinks it may apply to the next item as well.

195



196 **4.E. It is recommended that the City and Keene employers Identify where skills are**  
197 **transferable amongst potential applicants to help provide opportunities and widen the**  
198 **applicant pool (military to law enforcement, for example).**  
199

200 Ms. Schwieger stated that this ties into Dr. Morris’s conversation. Mr. Bohannon stated that the  
201 City has a new HR employee who is focused on recruitment, and he has seen a broader reach  
202 happening, but there may be some resources that they are not tapping. If the City only advertises  
203 locally, they are only reaching the local population. They are trying to broaden that, although  
204 some positions may not lend themselves to that. A good audit, as Mr. Aronson said earlier,  
205 would be able to provide information. Councilor Workman stated that she read an article  
206 recently about how NH and VT have become desirable for “climate refugees,” and she knows  
207 someone who came here from CA for that reason, and picked NH specifically, just by word of  
208 mouth. That is something to think about. Also, there are local [non-climate] refugee  
209 organizations that help with refugee settlement and getting people set up with jobs and housing.  
210 Maybe the HRC can pull them into these discussions. Ms. Fiske stated that she thinks Bellows  
211 Falls is becoming a Refugee Center, which is a potential pool. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated  
212 that she has also heard about COVID-19 refugees moving to the NH area because there is more  
213 space here.  
214

215 Councilor Workman stated that regarding the refugee population, she has a well-educated friend  
216 from Nigeria, but that education does not transfer to the US and her friend had to start at square  
217 one and prove themselves. Maybe the HRC can talk about a way to streamline that process.  
218 Licensing (for professions) is a whole conversation on its own, but there must be other jobs, and  
219 maybe the HRC can look at that when they look at transferable skills that 4.E. talks about. Dr.  
220 Morris stated that there is a lot to talk about with this, such as the need for people to understand  
221 the fact that testing is culturally informed, as shown by tons of research. Standardized tests like  
222 these are not good predictors of different groups, not just regarding race, but class. Dr. Filiault  
223 replied that the Boston Police hiring test was overturned as being racially and class biased and  
224 unusable and Boston had to come up with something different. Probably that case is a good one  
225 to start with, to look at the reasoning the court used and what they have offered as an opportunity  
226 to move forward. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that is a good idea, but of course, some of  
227 this is beyond their municipal control, and done at the State level. But the HRC can be an  
228 advocate for that change at the State level as well.  
229

230 Mr. Bohannon stated that this talks about “City of Keene employers.” Others replied that the  
231 language is “the City and Keene employers.” Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the City does  
232 not have entrance testing for any positions. Mr. Bohannon replied that actually, there is entrance  
233 testing for Police and Fire, which definitely is needed. He continued that he does not know  
234 much about the Fire entrance testing, but the Police entrance testing has to meet CALEA  
235 (standards). They are a national certified program that does a complete audit of all of the KPD’s  
236 services and how they conduct their business, and if the KPD does not pass it, they do not get  
237 accredited. It is rigorous and there are not many CALEA-certified police departments in the  
238 state. Councilor Workman replied that there are not many CALEA-certified departments in the

239 nation. Ms. Fiske stated that she does not know what other departments have testing. The  
240 Library does not. Certainly there are some certifications needed, like for some Public Works  
241 employees, but she is not sure if there is additional testing beyond the certifications. Discussion  
242 continued. Mr. Bohannon spoke of City departments and positions that have opportunities for  
243 employees to learn, study, and obtain certifications, and it is okay if it takes more than one  
244 attempt. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked who defines the testing – by department? The State?  
245 Mr. Bohannon replied that some is the State and some is national. Dr. Morris brought up the  
246 high school and its vocational opportunities; maybe that is something to think about. She  
247 continued that she hears teachers talking about the disparities between Keene students and  
248 students from nearby towns, and a lot of it is around class. It would be nice to figure out some of  
249 those key touchpoints, what young people are interested in, and provide that. Not everyone  
250 wants to go to college. Mr. Kirschner replied that there are wonderful programs and teachers at  
251 the [Cheshire Career Center]. Discussion continued. Mr. Bohannon stated that he knows this  
252 conversation is happening now at Keene High School (KHS), driven in part by teachers' desire  
253 to change the educational model, which they see does not work for every student, and all of the  
254 options at the Career Center. He gave more information about KHS's efforts and funding.

255  
256 Discussion continued about entrance tests in general and the potential biases in them. Ms.  
257 Schwieger stated that when she thinks of reasonable accommodations for disabled people, she  
258 wonders if there is a differentiated tool that an employer could use, with the understanding that  
259 someone comes with a life experience that is not acknowledged in the testing. Dr. Filiault  
260 replied that there is litigation about that, waiting on a decision. He continued that the argument  
261 is that, for example, if 60 is a passing score, perhaps your life experience gives you 10 points  
262 towards that and right now your score is only 50. Ms. Schwieger replied that she was thinking  
263 more about how people are even accessing information on the test. Mr. Bohannon stated that  
264 there is a national test to become a certified Parks and Recreation professional. He continued  
265 that it is a standardized test but its administration is ADA-compliant, and everyone in the field  
266 that he is connected with via LinkedIn, which is a diverse group of people, post that they  
267 received the certification. He does not think there is bias within that test when you get to that  
268 level of certification. The organization would be sued if they showed implicit bias.

269  
270 Discussion continued and Dr. Filiault stated that the HRC will never get a national licensing  
271 body to change its testing or the testing procedures, but he thinks they can be creative in ways to  
272 help students and applicants to be better prepared. This dovetails nicely with the internship  
273 opportunities and the educational opportunities they talked about in 4.D. An under-accessed  
274 resource in the community is River Valley, in addition to the Voc-Tech Center at the high  
275 school. Maybe the HRC should work more closely with River Valley and its students, who tend  
276 to be more socio-economically disadvantaged. They could target those students from an early  
277 stage of their educational career, give internship opportunities, and mentor them with an eye on  
278 preparing them for the test they are going to be taking, particularly students from socio-  
279 economically disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds. Dr. Morris replied that there are many  
280 methods to help people, and they are not directly coaching people on the test, but teaching them  
281 how to test. That is how she paid her way through her Master's program – she worked with a

282 program designed by a professor she knew, preparing inner city kids on how to test, because  
283 many kids from wealthier schools were going to big, posh test-taking [centers], which inner city  
284 kids did not have access to. The program worked with inner city kids on various strategies for  
285 taking various kinds of tests. Discussion continued about testing. Mr. Kirschner spoke about  
286 also working with open-access institutions that do not have the barrier of entrance tests, and  
287 increasing access channels from there. Dr. Filiault suggested they reach out to River Valley and  
288 ask them what the program-to-career pathways that the HRC, as a City group, can begin to work  
289 with, and about the programmatic avenues to begin to target students and bring them towards a  
290 career in City government, and what educational pathways would be appropriate. Others agreed  
291 and discussion continued about River Valley.

292

293 Mr. Aronson stated that he does not know what “applicant tracking systems” means. Testing  
294 would be a component, but what else goes into applicant tracking and what might fall through  
295 the cracks? Ms. Fiske replied that part of the tracking system is questions for applicants such as:  
296 Have you applied for this job before? Have you applied with this particular company before?  
297 What was your income at your last job? She continued that the City still asks that latter question.  
298 Some people who apply for Library jobs bravely decline to answer. The HRC could ask the City  
299 to reconsider that question. Mr. Bohannon stated that as an employer, he likes to know if an  
300 applicant was making, say, \$30 per hour at their previous job, because if the position he is hiring  
301 for only pays \$18 per hour, the person is not going to take the job. HRC members replied that is  
302 not necessarily true and gave several reasons why. Discussion continued about salary  
303 differences in private sector versus municipal jobs and the potential value and/or potential harm  
304 in the City continuing to ask applicants what their previous job paid, and what happens with  
305 “over-qualified” candidates. Mr. Bohannon spoke about CivicHR, the tracking service the City’s  
306 HR Department uses to track applicants, and how the information is available to the hiring  
307 manager in the department that is hiring and the HR Department. The City will soon be getting  
308 new financial software that will help that process and that data.

309

310 At 7:30 PM, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called for a five-minute recess. The meeting resumed at  
311 7:35 PM.

312

313 ***4.G. It is recommended that the City and Keene employers seek and generate incentives to***  
314 ***promote equity in employment.***

315

316 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked: who are we incentivizing? Others replied, the employers. Dr.  
317 Morris stated that many private businesses use this model, and provide incentives for people to  
318 do the work, and it becomes part of people’s evaluations and then they get bonuses. Dr. Filiault  
319 stated that this recommendation is vague – what is the incentive? Who is being incentivized?  
320 What is equity? This is hard to apply to a public model, because he does not think you can  
321 incentivize an individual in the public sphere; it would create a perverse situation. For example,  
322 [people would ask] if that is the reason you are hiring a diverse individual. Dr. Morris replied  
323 that the way she remembers it, everyone has a set goal/expectation, which everyone is measured  
324 by, and if you meet that, you would get an additional incentive. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated

325 that when she worked in corporate America and had to set annual goals, if her goal was, say,  
326 “come in under budget on three different programs,” if she did that, she got a bonus. But what  
327 metric do you use that would not be an issue in a public setting? What would a metric look like?  
328 Dr. Morris replied that she does not have them at her disposal right now, but they do exist. Chair  
329 Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if an action item could be to investigate this. Dr. Morris replied that  
330 they would really have to think it through. It might have been one of the recommendations in the  
331 Brattleboro report. They could talk with the HR person in Brattleboro. Chair Cunha-  
332 Vasconcelos stated that the only metrics that come instantly to her mind seem fairly token, which  
333 does not get the job done.

334

335 Ms. Fiske stated that there is a way of incentivizing without money. Others agreed. Ms. Fiske  
336 continued that for example, you have to check many boxes when applying for a federal grant –  
337 like “I agree that I have worker’s compensation insurance,” and “I agree that I follow these  
338 different rules.” One incentive could be that you can apply for contracts with the City if you  
339 have a DEI statement, for example, or that you would automatically be put into the pool for  
340 consideration. Or they could say that no one can apply unless they have a DEI statement. They  
341 can look at this more in the way that the federal government does, saying that you have to check  
342 certain boxes before you can qualify for getting contracts or participating as a partner or  
343 something else. Discussion ensued. Mr. Aronson stated that that could be agency-level, not  
344 individual-level. Ms. Fiske replied yes, especially for the City – that could be an easier ask.  
345 Then people would have to do it within the town, if they want to be involved with contracts for  
346 the City. Dr. Filiault stated that he likes the idea, but he wonders if there is a “home rule” issue  
347 with the City requiring a diversity statement. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they need to  
348 investigate that.

349

350 ***4.H. It is recommended that the City and Keene employers review and update initiatives,***  
351 ***systems, operations and mission statements to identify practices that limit or thwart diversity.***

352

353 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this is sort of the flipside to the same coin of internships,  
354 recruitment reviews, and things of that nature. She continued that she feels that the same  
355 avenues will work for this. Others agreed. Councilor Workman stated that when the RJCS  
356 Committee was talking about this, it was to give businesses a blueprint on where to start, when  
357 they say, “I’ve never even considered this. How do I start making change?” She continued that  
358 when she is looking at all of these recommendations, she is just looking at that – creating a  
359 blueprint/manual, for people looking to diversify or change the current status quo, for what to  
360 start looking at internally, and what the jumping off points are. Many businesses say that they  
361 want to do this work but just do not know where to start and need support such as  
362 recommendations for good, reputable trainings.

363

364 Mr. Aronson asked what action the HRC wants to take for 4.H. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
365 replied that she thinks it is along the same lines as the others above – they need to have a  
366 conversation with the DEI person at the Chamber and the people at the MDEIB. The HRC needs  
367 to handle it for the City, and the other two groups need to handle it for businesses, whether it is

368 identifying who should be reviewing these initiatives, systems, operations, and mission  
369 statements, or whether it is the HRC actively taking a look at them themselves or supporting that  
370 examination. That question might be a question for the next round, but it fits the same model.  
371 Ms. Fiske stated that she sees 4.H. as kind of a repeat from other items they have already looked  
372 at. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied yes, another facet, with the same tool kit to support it.  
373

374 ***4.I. It is recommended that the City intentionally factor diversity into community driven***  
375 ***development projects such as the arts corridor and the skate park, for example.***  
376

377 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she loves the idea but has no idea how to do this. Dr.  
378 Filiault stated that the City Council has a methodology they use for non-profit  
379 evaluation/funding, and this could be another factor they add into their formula. Ms. Fiske  
380 replied that staff also have protocol meetings with community groups that want to use City  
381 property.  
382

383 Mr. Bohannon stated that he believes that when the City is going through the design process for  
384 something like a park, Winchester Street, or the Comprehensive Master Plan, there are public  
385 forums. They put those into the RFP process. They have to publicize and promote and get  
386 people into the forums to discuss whatever the particular issue is, and he thinks the City as a  
387 whole does a good job of that. Whether individuals want to attend those sessions is a different  
388 topic, but the City at least puts it out there in a very broad sense.  
389

390 Dr. Morris stated that this could be interpreted in a different way. For example, as they are  
391 planning the skate park, or walkways for nature walks, or something else, they need to make sure  
392 it is accessible. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, that is a high priority. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
393 asked for more details about the term “accessible.” Do they mean physically accessible for  
394 people in wheelchairs? Because this document is about race. Dr. Morris replied that she is just  
395 trying to do what they have been asked to do, to expand the report beyond race, so she is  
396 thinking about that, but she is also thinking about, for example, questions like what type of  
397 artwork is displayed, and whether it [reflects diversity]. For example, the process for doing the  
398 Walldogs murals was very intentional. At first, the design the Walldogs had for the Abenaki  
399 mural looked, to her and others, more Navajo. The person who designed it was trying to be  
400 inclusive, but when the designer heard that feedback, she/he/they then consulted with an Abenaki  
401 person [to improve/change the design], and that is how Keene got the wall that is there now.  
402 That is the kind of spirit that [4.I. is about] – making sure that if they are going to do something,  
403 it is done intentionally. The Walldogs mural is a perfect example of a good, inclusive,  
404 intentional process. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she has not heard any negative  
405 feedback about the Walldogs project or process, which is rare. Dr. Morris replied yes, because  
406 there were so many opportunities for feedback and everything was very clear. She continued  
407 that in the beginning of the process, someone said the art would be about “the good ‘ole days,”  
408 which was [worrisome], until they took the time to really explain what their intentions and plans  
409 were and how they were going to involve the community and think beyond, and it was a great  
410 process. She would like to see that process replicated.

411

412 Ms. Schwieger stated that the Keene Arts Core is sort of social art project, in the fall, inviting an  
413 artist who will do an intentional project with maybe a visual outcome or maybe not, but it is that  
414 same intentional process. It is about identifying a need in the community and then working with  
415 the community about it, to have some sort of outcome. It is aligned with [what Dr. Morris is  
416 talking about], but it is a fine arts movement right now. It might be good to keep on their radar.  
417 The JDC is partnering with them, so she can let the HRC know about it. Others agreed and  
418 discussion continued about arts events.

419

420 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that regarding what Mr. Bohannon was saying about projects  
421 having accessible public forums and the question of whether people want to attend being beyond  
422 their control, there can be an element of culture leading some people to not feel that they can  
423 come to those meetings or participate. She wonders if there is a way for the HRC to influence  
424 that, such as advertising the public forums or somehow communicating about those meetings.  
425 She is not saying the City has not already done that; she is just saying this is something to be  
426 conscious of. Because just because the meetings are happening does not mean that everyone  
427 feels comfortable attending.

428

429 Mr. Bohannon replied that if the City advertises in the Keene Sentinel, social media, the radio,  
430 and so on and so forth, they have touched all the bases they can to promote the event. How else  
431 would they promote the event? Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that something that occurs to  
432 her is something that came up in the last meeting, and maybe it is beyond their purview, but the  
433 HRC had talked about making a list of local community groups, such as different religious  
434 communities, different cultural organizations, and so on and so forth. It may not be feasible, but  
435 if there were a distribution network for that information through those organizations, that means  
436 specifically reaching out to those groups, and people might feel that they are [welcome at the  
437 public meetings]. Others agreed. Ms. Fiske spoke of how the outreach for one project might be  
438 a little different than the outreach for another, such as the skate park and dog park. Mr.  
439 Bohannon replied that he goes to the Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Club, the  
440 Women's Club, and so on and so forth; he will go to any group that has interest. He hears what  
441 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos is saying, about having a list of groups they could contact related to  
442 different things, and he will go and talk to anyone. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that an  
443 email list would work. Mr. Bohannon replied that first they would have to make sure groups  
444 want to be a part of it. They just need to find or create such a list, and he can definitely reach  
445 out. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that one of the HRC's action items from the [April 12  
446 meeting about the RJCS Report] was to create that list, which will be an undertaking.

447

448 Dr. Filiault stated that he thinks creating such a list is a great idea, but his concern about reaching  
449 out to a list like that for these types of projects is that there will always be someone left off the  
450 list, who feels left out, and it is unrealistic to reach out to every group on the list for every  
451 project. There will always be some subjectivity for which communities are impacted and which  
452 are not, for who is reached out to for a particular project. Discussion ensued. Mr. Aronson  
453 stated that the bottom line is to be intentional in that process, and not just [quickly go down a

454 checklist]. It is true that someone could feel left out, but all they can do is try to be as intentional  
455 as possible with who they reach out to.

456

457 Mr. Aronson stated that he wants to add the phrase “emotional safety” to all of this. He  
458 continued that it is not just about inclusivity and access; it is also about ensuring that all of the  
459 processes are safe for all people, so people feel safe speaking up and feel safe using the skate  
460 park, wandering through the arts corridor, and so on and so forth. Dr. Morris replied that she  
461 cannot remember who set it up, but someone set up alternative ways to give the RJCS  
462 Committee feedback, so if people did not feel comfortable coming to a meeting, they could  
463 submit information in several different ways. Maybe some people do not want to be part of a  
464 public record or be easily identified.

465

466 Mr. Bohannon stated that he can have a conversation with Ms. Landry, who was the one who set  
467 that up. Mr. Kirschner stated that to Dr. Filiault’s point, he hopes the HRC would be building  
468 larger relationships with these groups aside from the asks, because yes, they will make mistakes  
469 and harm will happen, so it is about what they do in response to that. Ms. Schwieger replied that  
470 it is like a living organism, and maybe it would start to self-identify the missing links and  
471 generate its own expansion. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that erring on the side of not  
472 communicating because they are worried about offending someone is not the best way to go  
473 forward. She continued that they want to be reaching out to someone, and the possibility of  
474 missing someone does not seem like a good enough reason to not reach out to anyone. Ms. Fiske  
475 stated that as a City employee who is constantly trying to get communications out and keep the  
476 email list up to date, she thinks it might be easier if they encouraged people in the groups to  
477 subscribe the City’s social media accounts, the email list for City news, and so on and so forth.  
478 That might be easier, because the list would be impossible to keep up; it would change  
479 constantly. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that she hears what she is saying, but she also  
480 thinks the HRC needs to intentionally reach out to people to ask them to subscribe and maintain  
481 that connection. Ms. Fiske replied that is what she means. Unless there is a special project that  
482 touches on a certain thing, they cannot reach out to everyone, every time. There are so many  
483 projects across the City. But they can encourage groups to subscribe to the City’s news.

484

485 Dr. Morris stated that the MDEIB is trying to create an events list, because there are so many  
486 events, and there is not a central place in which to find them all listed. Maybe this could be a  
487 similar kind of thing – having one central place to give feedback on everything [various  
488 projects]. Ms. Schwieger stated that she knows a woman who started a tiny arts letter about  
489 eight years ago, and now it is massive, because it exponentially evolved and people wanted to be  
490 listed on it and new categories were created. This kind of thing can happen.

491

492 Dr. Filiault stated that this conversation has expanded to the topic of communication to the HRC,  
493 but he thinks it is a worthwhile conversation, because it relates to the question of how they can  
494 solicit feedback for City projects. He continued that he thinks they do need to have a centralized  
495 way to communicate with the HRC. It would also be worthwhile to have either a HRC email  
496 address or for each member to have their own City email address, so they can reach out to key

497 constituencies. Many of them are representing a key constituency/diversity, and a way to solicit  
498 feedback would be to talk to those members of the constituency or diversity they represent, about  
499 how people feel about a certain project. It would help if those people could email HRC members  
500 and talk to them, but it would not be appropriate for HRC members to give out their personal  
501 email addresses, and just having an email address up on the City's website saying that people can  
502 email the HRC with thoughts about diversity in the City. A Facebook page would be good, too.  
503 That would be a better way to solicit feedback, rather than constantly trying to run out and talk  
504 with everyone and sending people to come to talk to the HRC in all the ways people feel  
505 comfortable talking. Discussion ensued. Ms. Fiske stated that the only contact information the  
506 HRC's webpage currently has is Mr. Bohannon's phone number, not even email. Mr. Bohannon  
507 replied that the City does not put staff members' emails on the website. Chair Cunha-  
508 Vasconcelos stated that the problem is that it would fall on one individual to review all of the  
509 [emails to the HRC]. Ms. Fiske replied that it goes to a central place and then the IT Department  
510 creates a listserv, so when you do a form on the Library's website, for example, that form,  
511 depending on which box you check, goes to different batches of people. So something could be  
512 set up to automatically go to HRC members. Mr. Bohannon replied that department heads  
513 determine who the communication goes to. Anything related to parks, cemeteries, and programs  
514 goes to him and Kristy Morrison, his administrative assistant, and if they need to send something  
515 to someone else they will, but he and Ms. Morrison try to respond as quickly as possible. The  
516 City will not give HRC members City email addresses. However, the HRC could talk with Ms.  
517 Landry about generating how to promote the HRC.

518  
519 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that if the HRC collects that input, the question becomes what  
520 their process is for addressing it. That is much bigger question. Ms. Fiske replied yes, especially  
521 when their plate is so full with all of the community programs they are doing. Chair Cunha-  
522 Vasconcelos replied that there is an open question to discuss with the City Attorney the  
523 differences between committee and commission and what the HRC is empowered to do and not  
524 do. She absolutely supports the idea of having a way of getting input from the community  
525 directly, but before they roll anything out, they need to carefully consider not just how the  
526 information comes in, but how it is processed.

527  
528 ***4.J. It is recommended that the Keene Public Library as well as school libraries expand***  
529 ***collection diversity, that feedback be sought from the community for this purpose, that the***  
530 ***Keene Public Library facilitate reading groups to promote diversity within its collection, and***  
531 ***that libraries seek financial donations to help expand the collection diversity.***

532  
533 HRC members noted that 4.J. has been accomplished. Ms. Fiske stated that the Library has  
534 instituted a requirement that they have a minimum of 30% of new purchases reflect diversities.  
535 She continued that it is very expensive, but they are currently seeking an audit of their collection  
536 so they can see what exists in the collection and see ideas for titles to purchase in the future.  
537 They are seeking funding for that and using financial donations as part of the diversity collection.  
538 They have been averaging 35-40%, depending on the topic, which exceeds their required



539 minimum. Ms. Schwieger asked if it is the topic, or authorship, or both. Ms. Fiske replied that it  
540 reflects the author, storyline (fiction), and/or topic (nonfiction).

541

542 Mr. Aronson stated that last year for the wellness festival, he was going to have a children's  
543 story hour with stories about self-esteem and topics like that. He continued that the Library's  
544 Youth Department is great and gave him about 30 books, with all kinds of people represented. It  
545 was a great experience for him. He asked if there are audiobooks, too. Ms. Fiske replied yes,  
546 and the children's collection has been easiest to (increase the diversity of), because it has just  
547 been built in. It has been part of school curriculums for a long time, to publishers have been  
548 creating the content. Where the Library has been struggling is with adult content. Because the  
549 publishers for adult content tend to only publish things they think will sell. The Library  
550 sometimes struggles to find certain types of diversity, especially in fiction, before the current  
551 climate happened. Oprah's Book Club was an amazing thing for diversity, for adult fiction.  
552 Regarding nonfiction, the problem has sometimes been, for example, getting a book that is not  
553 just about cooking in Pakistan but written by an actual Pakistani person, or gardening books that  
554 do not just have people who look like Martha Stewart.

555

556 Mr. Kirschner asked Ms. Fiske what her engagement with the community has been like, in  
557 expanding the Library's collection. Ms. Fiske replied that whenever they do any book talks, they  
558 include a diverse range of titles, as do the book discussion groups. They have been having a lot  
559 of community conversations focusing on race, equity, and diversities. The Library's weekly  
560 newsletters highlight the titles. Mr. Kirschner replied that he hears a lot of what the Library is  
561 doing for the community, but his question is what the Library is doing *with* the community.  
562 What feedback have they sought or are they seeking for this purpose? Ms. Fiske replied that the  
563 Library purchases almost anything that a community member asks them to. Mr. Kirschner asked  
564 if that practice is well promoted. Ms. Fiske replied that there is a link people can use to make a  
565 request. She continued that in addition, if someone asks for an interlibrary loan for a book the  
566 Library is unable to get from another library, they will purchase it. Councilor Workman stated  
567 that a member of the RJCS Committee made a big donation to the Library last year [to increase  
568 diversity in the collection]. Ms. Fiske replied that that person moved out of town and she lost  
569 contact with her and never received that donation, but the Library is using all of its donations in  
570 this way. There is someone who has been sending the Library titles, particularly on Jewish  
571 history, for decades, in honor of his parents. Any monetary donations the Library receives have  
572 to automatically go through that diversity 30% minimum.

573

574 ***4.K. It is recommended that the City review Cheshire TV programming and encourage***  
575 ***additions and changes that promote diversity and inclusion.***

576

577 HRC members noted that they cannot address 4.K. because Cheshire TV [went off the air]. Ms.  
578 Fiske replied that on Thursday at the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee meeting,  
579 the agenda includes discussion a group that is putting in a bid to become the new public access  
580 station. She continued that it is an outside organization. Mr. Bohannon stated that they would

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581 provide access to the public to come in and do their own recordings. Dr. Morris stated that  
582 maybe the HRC could supply some content. Discussion continued.

583

584 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the next step (with the RJCS Report) is circling back  
585 around and starting at the top, and defining the next level of granularity. She continued that they  
586 need to pick another day to meet for two hours again. Discussion ensued. The group decided on  
587 Monday, May 23, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM.

588

589 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

590

591 Respectfully submitted by,  
592 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

593

594 Reviewed and edited by,  
595 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

3  
4  
5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, May 23, 2022

7:00 PM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Dr. Shaun Filiault, Vice Chair  
Marti Fiske  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

Members Not Present:

Heidi Schwieger, Alternate  
Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh  
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate  
Councilor Catherine Workman

8  
9  
10 **1) Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report**

11  
12 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM. She stated that now that the  
13 HRC has taken a first pass at all of the recommendations in the RJCS Committee's report, they  
14 will start again at the top and go into more detail.

15  
16 ***1.A. It is recommended that the City of Keene take a position against racism starting with a***  
17 ***strong anti-racist statement.***

18  
19 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the City has a written declaration, posted in City Hall and  
20 other City buildings. She continued that the HRC submitted a statement [to be read before each  
21 City meeting], which [the Mayor] had a concern, not wanting to add that burden to the beginning  
22 of meetings. Mr. Bohannon stated that for the record, the statement was not rejected for its  
23 content or its purpose. He continued that at the time, it was felt that adding one more thing to all  
24 of the committees, having them read the statement into the meeting minutes, was not necessarily  
25 comfortable. The HRC should go back and explore this. There is opportunity to revisit it.  
26

27 Discussion ensued. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if she and Mr. Bohannon could have a  
28 conversation with the Mayor. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, they can do that, and the HRC can  
29 refine the statement. He will set up the meeting with the Mayor. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
30 asked if the HRC should refine the language now. Mr. Bohannon replied no, they can first find  
31 out where the language needs to be refined.

32  
33 Dr. Morris stated that the Chamber of Commerce has a task force, and they are writing a  
34 statement as well. She continued that she does not know the content or intentions of that  
35 statement, such as whether it will just be for businesses.

36  
37 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that that brings up an action item that will keep coming up –  
38 the Chamber has a task force, there is the Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and  
39 Belonging Coalition (MDEIB), and there is the Human Rights Committee.

40  
41 Mr. Bohannon stated that the MDEIB, led by the YMCA, asked the City Council for \$55,000 to  
42 have an MDEIB Director at the YMCA. Dr. Morris replied that they need \$120,000, because it  
43 has to cover benefits and other things. She continued that they are doing fundraising. The  
44 person would be working on behalf of several places but would be housed at the Y and report to  
45 the Y's Executive Director, which some people are struggling to understand, which makes the  
46 fundraising efforts more difficult. Pierre [Morton, MDEIB] talked to the Mayor and the City  
47 Manager before presenting the request to the City Council. Some of the money would be used  
48 for training for the community and other sorts of things.

49  
50 Mr. Aronson stated that [regarding the statement the HRC wanted City committees to read  
51 before their meetings], he wonders if a compromise would be to always have the statement  
52 printed on committees' and boards' agendas. He continued that that way, it would not take up  
53 time to read it at the start of meetings. Others agreed that that is a good idea. Mr. Bohannon  
54 stated that the Chamber has, on its website, its Civil Rights Policy. Mr. Aronson stated that  
55 having a statement on a wall or website is one thing, but having it in front of decision-makers  
56 every time they have a meeting is different, and says 'this is a priority, and we need to have this  
57 mindset as we make our decisions.'

58  
59 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos read the Chamber's statement aloud:

60  
61 *"The GKPC operates its programs and services without regard to actual or perceived race,*  
62 *color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or age in*  
63 *accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and other statutes and authorities that prohibit*  
64 *discrimination in federally assisted programs and activities. Any person who believes they have*  
65 *been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title IV may file a complaint with*  
66 *the GKPC."*

67  
68 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she read this aloud because she wants to understand where  
69 the HRC's goals differ from the Chamber's. She continued that the Chamber seems to have an

70 interest in adhering to federal policy, and the HRC's goals are significantly less regulatory. It is  
71 relevant for the three groups to be in communication. She does not quite know how to go about  
72 that or what that would look like. Maybe the chairs of the three groups could talk. Dr. Morris  
73 replied that Mr. Morton is stepping down as co-chair of the MDEIB due to work responsibilities,  
74 and Councilor Workman is the other co-chair, and she does not know who is taking over for Mr.  
75 Morton. She continued that they could reach out to Mr. Morton, who would probably be happy  
76 to meet [with Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos and the other chairs], but she does not know when he is  
77 stepping down. Councilor Workman has been very involved.

78  
79 ***1.B. It is recommended that the City work with community stakeholders to establish clear***  
80 ***community racial equity and inclusivity goals and that the goals be widely adopted by the City***  
81 ***and Keene agencies and businesses.***

82  
83 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos took a few moments to read through the HRC's previous discussion of  
84 1.B., from the (April 12, 2022) meeting minutes. She stated that she will consider 1.B. taken  
85 care of for the short term, given what those meeting minutes say. She continued that there is a  
86 bigger set of questions around the idea of the ombudsman and how to collect input, and so on  
87 and so forth, further down the list of action items.

88  
89 Dr. Morris asked if they know how other communities might do something like that. Chair  
90 Cunha-Vasconcelos replied no, but that did come up in conversation a few times. She continued  
91 that Brattleboro, VT, has undergone a process like this and there might be best practices to look  
92 for. Discussion ensued. Dr. Morris shared some information about how Brattleboro's DEI  
93 Committee works. She agreed to contact Brattleboro's HR Director, Sally Nix, to see if Ms. Nix  
94 could have a conversation with her and Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos. Mr. Aronson asked if Mr.  
95 Bohannon knows of other HRCs in the state or is part of a listserv he could reach out to and ask.  
96 Mr. Bohannon replied that he is not aware of any other groups like the HRC in the state, but he  
97 can put out an email and ask. He asked if Ms. Fiske could do the same, by reaching out to  
98 Library folks. Ms. Fiske replied yes, and they get might get more responses if they ask about  
99 DEI groups in addition to HRCs. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if Keene has any kind of DEI  
100 group (involving City staff). Mr. Bohannon replied no, and discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon  
101 stated that Rebecca Landry, IT Director and staff liaison for the RJCS Committee, knows  
102 someone who is interested in a summer internship with the City and maybe they would be  
103 interested in looking at a DEI program. That is something to explore.

104  
105 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that there was an action item from the minutes that did not  
106 specify who would be taking the action. Mr. Bohannon replied that that is true of many of the  
107 action items the HRC came up with. Mr. Aronson replied that part of tonight's work is to figure  
108 that out. Others agreed. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she would like to start putting  
109 some timeframes around the action items as well. She asked if it is reasonable for action items to  
110 be initiated within a week, in general. She continued that an example would be that if someone's  
111 action item is to reach out to a person the HRC would like to have a conversation with, they send

112 that email out within a week of being tasked with it. They cannot control how quickly the person  
113 responds to the email. Others agreed.

114  
115 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that they know they need to find a way of connecting public  
116 comment. She continued that she does not think they know yet if the HRC is the correct body to  
117 collect public input. Her personal opinion is that there is no point in collecting information if  
118 you do not have a process to close the loop on the information, whether it is a complaint,  
119 concern, recommendation, and so on and so forth. If it just goes into the void, people get  
120 frustrated. Mr. Aronson had raised the idea of having an ombudsman. The HRC does not have  
121 the authority to create any new positions for the City. Maybe the HRC would make a  
122 recommendation to the City Council. Maybe the HRC's responsibility is to brainstorm a process  
123 for collecting the information, which identifies the responsible parties in that process; they could  
124 flesh out the process and recommend it to the City Council.

125  
126 Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that yes, the HRC could flesh out a process and  
127 recommend it to the City Council. He continued that Dr. Morris had suggested the HRC have  
128 open forums/open discussions in the community about specific topics, and see what gets drawn  
129 out; that is something the HRC could talk about.

130  
131 Mr. Bohannon asked Dr. Morris if it accurate to say that if the MDEIB Coalition does not get the  
132 funding it needs [for the MDEIB Director], the group will no longer exist. Dr. Morris replied  
133 yes, because its main purpose is to try to get that position in place. She continued that there are  
134 some things the Education subcommittee will be doing in the meantime, but getting the MDEIB  
135 Director is the group's main focus.

136  
137 Ms. Fiske stated that her concern with the idea of the public forums is not knowing where the  
138 public comment would go – is the person taking the comments supposed to find a solution? It  
139 could be anything from something needing a detective to just someone needing resources pointed  
140 out. Public comments could be about crimes, or policy matters, or anything else. Discussion  
141 continued about who has what responsibility. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the question  
142 is who is triaging the public input. Discussion continued about what an ombudsman would be.  
143 Mr. Aronson stated that if there was an ombudsman, who is kind of like a concierge, that person  
144 would be entrusted with the triage, directing, and networking with other non-profits like the ADL  
145 and other advocacy groups equipped to do some of the research and networking.

146  
147 Ms. Fiske stated that this requires some discussion; that ombudsman work sounds like a full-time  
148 job. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that her question first is whether this is the direction the  
149 HRC wants to go in, designing this process as a recommendation. She continued that an  
150 ombudsman is an example of what the process might look like. Reality is that the HRC does not  
151 have a budget or any authority. What should the HRC's time be spent on, in examining these  
152 action items?

153

154 Mr. Aronson replied that if there were a State ombudsman or State Chief Diversity Officer, this  
155 discussion would be different. Maybe they could advocate for that.

156  
157 Mr. Kirschner stated that he hesitates about creating a process for another person/position to  
158 enact. What is the need? If the need is solutions to racial bias, he expects that there will be a lot  
159 of emotional labor in this work, not just practical. He continued that he approaches this kind of  
160 work in relationship, and relationships involve emotions. Racial harm can cause trauma.  
161 Someone who has experienced or witnessed racial harm is likely to have many emotions and a  
162 need for processing, to be able to move through and find a solution or reconciliation. Thus, he  
163 hesitates to have a solution-focused process, because the truth telling is so important. Public  
164 forums and conversations are important, to see if there is wisdom that can come from the  
165 community, rather than outsourcing that to another person or process.

166  
167 Dr. Filiault stated that they need to stay grounded in their role as the City's Human Rights  
168 Committee, and they are not a commission. He continued that the best they can do is make a  
169 broad recommendation. They do not have authority and thus need to stay at a high level of  
170 abstraction in their recommendations. Ms. Fiske added that she is concerned about the HRC  
171 possibly taking on too much work. She continued that this is their third meeting about the RJCS  
172 Report in addition to their primary work, the educational component. The RJCS Report deserves  
173 recognition, but she thinks the HRC will need to decide at some point whether to focus on the  
174 RJCS Report or their educational work, because she does not think they can do both. Mr.  
175 Aronson agreed and stated that the HRC is approaching hour six of working on the RJCS Report,  
176 and the question is "How long is this piece of string?" Ms. Fiske replied that the HRC could  
177 potentially make recommendations for another committee to pick up. Mr. Bohannon asked if  
178 that can be the MDEIB Coalition.

179  
180 Ms. Fiske asked if the HRC needs to get the Mayor's permission to pass this work on, if the  
181 Mayor assigned them the RJCS Report. Mr. Bohannon replied that there is debate about where  
182 the report lies, because there is no public record of the report being assigned to the HRC, but the  
183 report itself referred it to the HRC. He continued that obviously no one wants the report to  
184 collect dust, but this needs to be figured out. What is the MDEIB Coalition's charge? That  
185 group is not connected to the City. There seems to be a little circle of people having this  
186 conversation right now. What about the other groups? He thinks it will help to have a meeting  
187 between Luca Paris, a Chamber of Commerce representative, Dan Smith from the YMCA, Chair  
188 Cunha-Vasconcelos, himself, Councilor Workman and Pierre Morton from the MDEIB  
189 Coalition, to talk about who will take ownership of this and how to move it forward. He has  
190 concerns about how the MDEIB Director position could be sustained, because everyone is  
191 fighting for positions and funding. Every City department needs positions. It does not seem  
192 likely that a new, outside position could be funded/sustained, given this.

193  
194 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she thinks that an underlying issue they keep bumping into  
195 is that there is no structure for this kind of work. Mr. Bohannon replied that is correct. They are  
196 trying to create it. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they are trying to do it without

197 necessarily having the organizational buy-in of the City. The HRC is an ancillary entity. Mr.  
198 Bohannon replied that he believes the HRC can provide education to the greater Keene area with  
199 the intent from this report. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that the HRC is good at education.  
200 Mr. Bohannon replied right, and they need to continue the education, otherwise it will get lost if  
201 the HRC stops carrying the flag on this.

202  
203 Dr. Filiault stated that he thinks the HRC can continue to create educational programming that  
204 keeps the RJCS Report's recommendations/bullets in mind and carries the charge of them. He  
205 continued that they have spent over five hours talking about what the bullets could look like.  
206 Maybe at this point the HRC should write a letter to City Council and the Mayor about their  
207 thoughts on the RJCS Report's recommendations, and leave it at that. And then continue  
208 working seriously on the charge that they know they have, to continue educating the city. The  
209 HRC can incorporate the bullets from the report into their work when they create educational  
210 events and make sure they are checking the boxes.

211  
212 Discussion continued. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC should absolutely hold  
213 itself accountable to the RJCS Report in its own work, but she is concerned that there are  
214 elements of this that will not get done, if the HRC is not taking up the banner. For example,  
215 unless the City Council decides to have a public forum on a matter, [it probably will not happen].  
216 Communities do not tend to do that unless something goes wrong. If there is going to be a public  
217 forum on any of these issues, she suspects it will have to come from the HRC. She agrees that  
218 education is the HRC's primary charge, but not their only one. The idea of putting their  
219 recommendations in a letter to the City Council and saying "This is as far as our mandate can  
220 take us, given the nature of this committee" feels a bit like passing the buck. Dr. Filiault replied  
221 that the HRC does not have a buck to spend. He continued that if they write such a letter to the  
222 City Council, it would be read into the record and given to City staff to work with. The Council  
223 might give it to a Council committee, or to Mr. Bohannon to give back to the HRC, but then the  
224 HRC will be officially given a charge, and there will be a public record of it.

225  
226 Ms. Fiske stated that the HRC has come up with action items they *can* do, like collecting  
227 resources for educational training for City partners, like businesses, for example. She continued  
228 that that is a solid piece of work they could accomplish, publishing the list of resources for  
229 anyone who wants it. Dr. Morris replied that here is an example of overlapping work in the  
230 different groups, because the Education subcommittee of the MDEIB Coalition has started  
231 collecting these resources and is planning to generate a list to publish on the YMCA's website.  
232 She continued that they just discussed it this morning. There is some duplication of work. It will  
233 be such a valuable conversation when the chairs from the Chamber's group, the HRC, and the  
234 MDEIB Coalition get together. Discussion continued about the work of the Education  
235 subcommittee, which includes the Events & Outreach Coordinator from the Monadnock Food  
236 Co-op. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if Dr. Morris could reach out to her about collaboration  
237 possibilities.

238



239 Mr. Kirschner spoke about the benefits of coalition building with the Chamber's group and the  
240 MDEIB Coalition, and how this is not just the HRC's work, it is everyone's work, which means  
241 sharing the responsibilities, resources, and information. He continued that the relationships  
242 between these groups will have a direct impact on whatever it is that the HRC is able to do for  
243 the City. Others agreed.

244  
245 Mr. Bohannon stated that a while back, the HRC used to give an annual report to the City  
246 Council. He continued that the HRC could ask to go on the Municipal Services, Facilities, and  
247 Infrastructure Committee (MSFI) agenda to provide an update on what the HRC has been doing.  
248 They could do this every year. It would keep the City Council aware of the HRC's work, their  
249 events, and their financial situation and needs. He spoke of how keeping the HRC's work,  
250 including how they are collaborating with other groups, in the Council's awareness could help  
251 the HRC. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon added that he would recommend that HRC  
252 members make the presentation, instead of him, because the Council hears from him so much  
253 already.

254  
255 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is still getting her head around how much the HRC can  
256 reasonably accomplish and what exactly they are mandated to do. She continued that she fears  
257 moving forward in a vacuum under the seal of the City of Keene without the actual government  
258 of the City of Keene sharing the HRC's agenda. The other two organizations that the HRC  
259 wants to partner with have some authority by dint of their membership giving those groups  
260 authority. If you a member of the Chamber and on the [DEI] committee, it is because you want  
261 to participate in it, whereas the HRC is here because they have been selected to do this work, but  
262 it does not necessarily mean that they are bringing the City with them. The City is on board with  
263 the HRC's educational programming, or at least, the HRC has never had any complaints, but  
264 regarding anything further, there is no "loop closing" to make sure the City government actually  
265 supports what the HRC is trying to do. Discussion ensued. Dr. Morris spoke of Mr. Morton's  
266 experiences meeting with the Mayor and the City Manager as the co-chair of the MDEIB  
267 Coalition, and asked if it is similar to the process for the HRC. Mr. Bohannon spoke of the  
268 differences and similarities in processes for an outside group (MDEIB) and an inside group  
269 (HRC) seeking funding.

270  
271 Ms. Fiske asked if the HRC should have a meeting with the Mayor, or talk with the Council. She  
272 asked if it is correct that the RJCS Report is the Mayor's project. Mr. Bohannon replied that the  
273 Council adopted it. Dr. Morris stated that the Mayor gave the charge. Ms. Fiske replied that it  
274 seems like it would make sense for the HRC to organize their notes better, to specify the action  
275 items they have thought of, the problems they are running up against - money, lack of clarity  
276 about their charge, duplications of efforts, and so on and so forth, and ask [the Mayor and City  
277 Council], "How far do you want us to go?" They could ask if it makes sense for this project to  
278 be turned over to another group or for some combination of the groups to happen. Others  
279 agreed.

280

281 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if that sounds reasonable to Mr. Bohannon. Mr. Bohannon  
282 replied yes and stated that so much of what the HRC has said tonight is also said in the report –  
283 such as, there is a lot of work, and it is hard to know where to start. Ms. Fiske replied that there  
284 is also the question of who has the authority to be able to do the work. Mr. Bohannon replied  
285 that the answer to that, from the report is: *“The committee makes the following recommendations*  
286 *to the City Council and to the community at large based on information gleaned from its*  
287 *research, discussion, and public input. Though this is the result of the work of a City committee,*  
288 *the recommendations will be most effective as adopted by an intended audience including*  
289 *businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies throughout Keene and the greater*  
290 *region. It is acknowledged that this will likely include some overlap in coordination, with*  
291 *additional local and State initiatives focused on racial justice.”* Mr. Kirschner replied that this  
292 report is so big the HRC does not have to overlap in its efforts with other groups. They can say  
293 what they are focusing on and prioritizing. That is a conversation they need to have. Mr.  
294 Bohannon replied yes, they will set that meeting up, and maybe it could happen quarterly. He  
295 continued that it does not have to be the same people each time, but each meeting could have  
296 people from the Chamber’s group, the MDEIB Coalition, and the HRC, to check in with each  
297 other.

298  
299 Dr. Filiault stated that the HRC can choose one piece of the RJCS Report to do and do it well.  
300 He continued that maybe it is integrating the report into the HRC’s work and creating a checklist  
301 for themselves, and finding the pieces that the people in this room can run with, and running with  
302 it well. Then, coordinating the HRC’s work with the work of others who are also picking up the  
303 torch. Discussion continued about the logistics of the three groups meeting together, like where  
304 to meet, when, and the question of meeting minutes. Mr. Bohannon clarified that those quarterly  
305 (or however frequent) meetings would not be public meetings. He continued that if they were  
306 public meetings, they would [be subject to the requirements of RSA 91-A, such as noticed in  
307 advance, with agendas, meeting minutes, and so on and so forth]. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
308 replied that the intent would be something less formal. Discussion ensued about whether they  
309 would want a public record, and what the public expects. Mr. Bohannon stated that other HRC  
310 members are welcome to attend whatever meetings are set up with the MDEIB Coalition and the  
311 Chamber’s group, as long as there are not so many HRC members that they create a quorum of  
312 the HRC, [which would make it a public meeting subject to RSA 91:A]. He continued that there  
313 could be a greater collaboration somewhere that he is not thinking of. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
314 replied that they will not know until they meet.

315  
316 Ms. Fiske stated that as long and painful as this process has been, the HRC now knows the report  
317 intimately. She continued that they have some good ideas, a good sense of what is going on in  
318 the community, and some things they can make recommendations for and work towards. Mr.  
319 Bohannon replied that he agrees, and he would like to see if he and Ms. Fiske can work on the  
320 City side, regarding trying to push some of the DEI stuff, maybe with the possibility of the intern  
321 he mentioned earlier. He continued that he thinks that is where some of the bones/structure will  
322 get created. To quote what Mr. Kirschner said to him the other day, “Twelve hours a year does  
323 not solve this problem.” It is true. The HRC has added six hours, but it is still not enough. If

324 someone has 148 hours that they can dedicate to focusing on some of the things the HRC is  
325 looking to get done, it pushes the HRC in the direction they want to go in. He can have that  
326 conversation. Having that intern participate in the HRC's meetings would be good.

327  
328 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if Mr. Bohannon is talking about him and Ms. Fiske trying to  
329 create a DEI committee for the City departments, like a safety committee, involving this intern.  
330 Mr. Bohannon replied that he does not know; they need to have that conversation. Chair Cunha-  
331 Vasconcelos replied that she thinks it is a great idea. Discussion continued. Dr. Morris stated  
332 that that is something to keep in the back of their minds when/if they meet with Sally Nix. Chair  
333 Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if Mr. Bohannon wants to join that meeting with Sally Nix. Mr.  
334 Bohannon replied yes, it could be helpful for him to understand what is happening in  
335 Brattleboro. He continued that he has some other New England communities he can check in  
336 with, to see what they are doing. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she thinks a DEI  
337 committee in the City, similar to a safety committee, is a wonderful idea and perhaps not  
338 something that should come from the HRC. If it could happen organically, as a recommendation  
339 from staff, it would have more traction. Ms. Fiske replied yes, right now some DEI work is  
340 being done by individuals in different departments, but they do not know what other departments  
341 are doing. Dr. Morris stated that the DEI Committee in Brattleboro came about after a colleague  
342 of hers provided a full day of DEI training to every single municipal employee, and the  
343 employees had the idea themselves of creating a DEI Committee, so Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos is  
344 right, it did not come from an outside group.

345  
346 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that they have a few minutes left in this meeting. She continued  
347 that they have some action items, and getting the meeting minutes and notes and action items  
348 organized is the first step. She suggests that the action items they have in the short term –  
349 contacting Sally Nix, reaching out to the co-op's Outreach & Events person, and reaching out to  
350 the Chamber's group and the MDEIB Coalition – are valuable regardless of whether the HRC  
351 writes a letter to Council or has a meeting with the Mayor, and certainly within the HRC's  
352 purview. Once the notes are together, they could review that document via email, and come  
353 back together to decide how to proceed on a broader basis. She asked if that sounds reasonable.  
354 Others agreed.

355  
356 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 8:27 PM.

357  
358 Respectfully submitted by,  
359 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

360  
361 Reviewed and edited by,  
362 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

1 City of Keene  
2 **New Hampshire**

3  
4 **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE**  
5 **MEETING MINUTES**  
6  
7

**Monday, June 6, 2022**

**5:00 PM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Shaun Filiault, Vice Chair  
Marti Fiske, Ex-Officio  
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate (via Zoom at 5:09 PM)  
Dr. Dottie Morris (at 5:05 PM)  
Councilor Catherine Workman  
Daniel Aronson  
Hunter Kirschner

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

**Members Not Present:**

Dr. Mohammed Saleh  
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Heidi Schwieger

8  
9  
10 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**

11  
12 Vice Chair Filiault called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. Roll call was conducted.

13  
14 **2) Approval of May Meeting(s) Minutes**

- 15 a) **May 2, 2022**  
16 b) **May 9, 2022**  
17 c) **May 23, 2022**

18  
19 Mr. Bohannon stated that the HRC needs to suspend the rules of order to consider the action on  
20 the April 4, 2022 meeting minutes. He continued that the reason is that it is not proper to append  
21 a document to a set of meeting minutes that refutes what was documented in the meeting  
22 minutes. That creates a record of something that did not occur at the meeting. This explanation  
23 was documented at the May 2, 2022 meeting when the comments were made, which will be  
24 adopted today.  
25

26 Ms. Fiske made a motion to suspend the rules to consider action on the April 4, 2022 meeting  
27 minutes. Ms. Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous, roll call vote.

28  
29 Vice Chair Filiault asked for a motion. Mr. Kirschner made a motion to reconsider the adoption  
30 of the April 4, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Aronson seconded the motion, which passed by  
31 unanimous vote.

32  
33 Vice Chair Filiault stated that the third step for the HRC to correct its error is for someone to  
34 make a motion to adopt the minutes of the April 4, 2022 meeting as originally submitted.

35

36 Dr. Morris arrived at 5:05 PM.

37

38 Mr. Aronson made a motion to adopt the minutes of the April 4, 2022 meeting as originally  
39 submitted. Ms. Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

40

41 Vice Chair Filiault asked for a motion to approve the May 2 meeting minutes. Mr. Bohannon  
42 stated that he apologizes for getting the draft minutes sent out late; he was ill. He continued that  
43 it is okay to table the minutes if need be.

44

45 Vice Chair Filiault made a motion to table the approval of the meeting minutes of May 2, May 9,  
46 and May 23, 2022 until the next meeting. Mr. Kirschner seconded the motion, which passed by  
47 unanimous vote.

48

49 **3) Finance Report**

50

51 Mr. Bohannon stated that there has been no change. He continued that everything they see in the  
52 Finance Report this month is identical to what was there last month. The City Council will issue  
53 their installment, which will be \$1,000 this year if they pass the budget next Thursday night.  
54 July's Finance Report will reflect that.

55

56 **4) Human Rights Committee Purpose**

57

**A) Review of City Ordinance**

58

59 Mr. Bohannon stated that given some of the comments and direction the HRC had at the last  
60 meeting, he felt it was important to go back to the HRC's purpose as per the City Ordinance.

61

62 Ritu Budakoti arrived via Zoom at 5:09 PM.

63

64 Mr. Bohannon read aloud:

65

66 *"The Human Rights Committee exists to promote the principles of social justice, non-violence,*  
67 *equity, diversity, inclusion, and multi-culturalism through educational programs, community*  
68 *service, and public events.*

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111

*The Human Rights Committee shall have the following powers and duties:*

- *To celebrate and honor the significance of the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jonathan Daniels;*
- *To promote the principles of social justice, non-violence, equity, and multiculturalism through education programs, community service, and public events;*
- *To encourage the elimination of barriers, which may exist within the Keene community that discourage a more diverse and inclusive community;*
- *To reassure and support under-represented groups who may feel unwelcome in Keene;*
- *To educate the community on the advantages of a more diverse and inclusive community.*
- *The committee is authorized to conduct fundraising events to further its goals. All gifts and donations presented to the Human Rights Committee shall be formally accepted by the City Council."*

Mr. Bohannon stated that most of this is from the original committee, which was the Martin Luther King, Jr./Jonathan Daniels Committee and was renamed the Human Rights Committee. He continued that there was some debate a couple meetings ago relating to whether the HRC should be a commission. There is a NH State human rights commission. If they get into that territory, they become a legal body. The HRC's purpose is to provide education programs, community service, and public events, not to create legal policy. If they were to create policy, it would have to go through the City Council and be adopted by the City Council for that purpose and be codified that way. That is the big difference. If this group feels that they need to go beyond the education programs, community service, and public events, which traditionally has been everything the HRC has done, they need to have a further conversation. However, if the HRC members all agree that their purpose can continue to be as it always has been, and they want to bring something forward, they do have an avenue for that. They have the ability to go through the City Council and work that way, which would be in a public forum. He does not think they need to have a role as a commission. This statement of purpose gives them clear direction. If they wanted to wordsmith the purpose the way they did about 8 or 9 years ago, they could. He thinks the multiculturalism piece was added to the purpose at that time.

Councilor Workman stated that she thinks what they have makes sense right now, as long as the HRC members all know they can still *inform* policy. She continued that they may not be able to create policy, but they can advocate, inform, and try to move the city in the direction the HRC feels is needed on certain issues related to the HRC's work. She thinks the purpose statement is clear that it is about bringing awareness to human rights issues in the community.

Vice Chair Filiault stated that he agrees and thinks the HRC needs to be very clear-eyed as to what they are doing, though, when they say, "We can bring awareness to policy." They just witnessed that with what they tried to achieve through the RJCS Report. When they try to take on something as broad as racial justice, they can go for six or eight hours and only just scratch the surface. They could go on for another six to eight hours and continue to have only scratched

112 the surface. They can bring awareness to the issues, but it is beyond the capacity of this  
113 committee to completely change key policies to be able to fully address those issues. It is not the  
114 role of this committee to fully address those issues; the HRC is not the City Council.

115  
116 Vice Chair Filiault stated that he does not know if they need to make a motion about this or just  
117 accept it as informational. Mr. Bohannon replied that they can accept it as informational, but he  
118 wants to make sure everyone feels, as a cohesive unit, that this is the HRC's mission and  
119 purpose, and understands that if they want to go beyond it, they have an avenue to adjust it.  
120 They can always come back and revisit the purpose. They can wordsmith it and [request to]  
121 update the Ordinance at any time. It would take several processes, but it is possible.

122

### 123 **B) Statement of Inclusion**

124

125 Vice Chair Filiault stated that the statement of inclusion is in the back of the agenda packet. Mr.  
126 Bohannon replied that unfortunately, he was ill and had to cancel his meeting with Chair Cunha-  
127 Vasconcelos and the Mayor (about this statement of inclusion) and it will be at least another  
128 week before it can be rescheduled. He continued that however, he wanted to bring the text of the  
129 statement back in front of the HRC for discussion and direction.

130

131 Discussion ensued about the wording of the statement of inclusion, and how to edit it.

132

133 Ms. Fiske made a motion to adopt the following as the Human Rights Committee's statement of  
134 inclusion: "*In our efforts to create a more equal and just society, we move forward with the firm*  
135 *intention to value the voices, opinions, and experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with*  
136 *the awareness and humility that the statements and decisions we make will have a different*  
137 *impact for those with different life experiences.*" Councilor Workman seconded the motion,  
138 which passed by unanimous vote.

139

140 Vice Chair Filiault asked how the HRC wants to use the statement. Should it be read before each  
141 meeting, or printed on each agenda, or both?

142

143 Mr. Kirschner made a motion for the statement of inclusion to be printed on each HRC agenda  
144 and read aloud at the start of each HRC meeting. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion, which passed  
145 by unanimous vote.

146

### 147 **5) Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Coalition Updates**

148

149 Councilor Workman stated that she was not at the last Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,  
150 and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB) meeting, but she has the meeting minutes. She asked if Dr.  
151 Morris had any updates.

152

153 Dr. Morris stated that she thinks the Education Subcommittee of the MDEIB should be in touch  
154 with the HRC so there is better synchrony between the two, since the HRC's mission is largely

155 about education. She continued that the Education Subcommittee also talked about creating a  
156 resource page or some sort of resource document for people, and then questioned whether it  
157 should include just NH-based resources, or Monadnock region resources. She is putting  
158 someone from the Education Subcommittee in touch with Ms. Fiske, because that is something  
159 Ms. Fiske was working on, too. This way they can join forces.

160

161 Councilor Workman stated that for the MDEIB itself, the big focus is fundraising for the  
162 Executive Director position and then finding someone to fill it. Dr. Morris added that there is a  
163 request to the City for \$50,000 for that position. Councilor Workman replied that that request  
164 will be at the next City Council meeting. The MDEIB is asking outside agencies for \$10,000.

165

166 Discussion ensued about the MDEIB's funding request. Vice Chair Filiault asked about the  
167 City's process regarding the MDEIB's request. Mr. Bohannon replied that the Finance,  
168 Organization, and Personnel (FOP) Committee will discuss it this Thursday and make a  
169 recommendation to the City Council, for the Council's June 16 meeting. Discussion continued.  
170 Ms. Fiske spoke about how and why it is highly unlikely that the Council will vote to give the  
171 MDEIB its requested amount.

172

173 Mr. Aronson spoke in agreement with Mr. Bohannon, stating that he has been thinking about this  
174 duplication of work, and questioning whether the HRC is needed if the MDEIB is moving  
175 forward, or if there is a way to consolidate. He asked if the MDEIB envisions itself becoming  
176 independent from the YMCA and doing its own fundraising, or if its relationship with the  
177 YMCA is permanent. Dr. Morris and Councilor Workman replied the latter, to the best of their  
178 understanding. Councilor Workman stated that the question of the extent of the City's  
179 involvement is not something she can discuss in full at this meeting, but she encourages Mr.  
180 Aronson to contact the MDEIB about his questions and concerns. She also encourages  
181 anyone/everyone to share their thoughts about the MDEIB's funding request with the City  
182 Councilors.

183

184 Vice Chair Filiault stated that in the interest of time and in staying with the HRC's mission and  
185 purview, he would like to accept this as informational and move on with the agenda.

186

187 **6) Acceptance of Committee Event Reports**

188

189 Mr. Bohannon stated that there are no committee event reports.

190

191 **7) Community Outreach**

192

193 Mr. Bohannon stated that Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos wanted to bring this forward as an agenda  
194 item. He suggests they table it since she is not here.

195

196 **8) Racial Justice and Community Safety Report**

197



198 Vice Chair Filiault stated that the question is what the HRC will decide to do, based on their  
199 many hours of discussing this report, but given that Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos led those  
200 discussions and she is not here, he suggests tabling this agenda item until the next meeting.

201  
202 Ms. Fiske stated that she wanted to closely read the meeting minutes from those long meetings,  
203 and make notes on them. She continued that she recalls that those notes say what the HRC had  
204 decided regarding each item. She encourages everyone else to read those meeting minutes, too.  
205 Vice Chair Filiault replied yes, everyone should read those so they can have a focused discussion  
206 next time.

207  
208 Ms. Fiske made a motion to table this agenda item. Ms. Manwaring seconded the motion, which  
209 passed by unanimous vote.

210  
211 **9) New Business**

212  
213 Mr. Bohannon stated that Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos is not able to attend the Juneteenth  
214 subcommittee meeting via Zoom, and asks that they reschedule it to June 13 or 14. He continued  
215 that the event is very soon. Discussion ensued, and Dr. Morris stated that they can still meet  
216 tonight, as best they can. Councilor Workman stated that they should also schedule another one.  
217 Mr. Bohannon replied that the Juneteenth group can figure that out after the HRC meeting.

218  
219 Vice Chair Filiault asked if there was any other new business. Mr. Aronson stated that a couple  
220 meetings ago the HRC had talked about homelessness and how it could become in the HRC's  
221 purview. He continued that he celebrates the new port-a-potty at the skate park. The listserv for  
222 the Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP) has had a flurry of activity today, talking about how  
223 citizens can support the upkeep of that, because the City is limited in terms of policing it and  
224 cleaning it. MIP might be able to play a role in supporting things like this, getting citizens  
225 involved in the process of maintaining things that they fight for.

226  
227 Vice Chair Filiault asked for comment from the public.

228  
229 James Rinker of 34 Cottage St. stated that he represents the Keene Sentinel. He continued that at  
230 the last meeting, he made an appeal of community outreach and talked about the Keene Sentinel  
231 wanting to partner with the HRC in some way to make the "well-kept secret" of the HRC's work  
232 and events not so secret, and to promote the education initiatives the HRC is working on. He has  
233 a handout of three different ways of contacting the Sentinel – one is for news/press releases, the  
234 second is for letters to the editor, and the third is how to upload events into the community  
235 calendar. He also has his business card, as the Digital Community Engagement Journalist. A  
236 big part of his role is outreach, like what he is doing right now. He will be back in July. HRC  
237 members thanked Mr. Rinker.

238  
239 Bill Bradford Hutchinson, of Marlboro St., stated that he wants to bring to the HRC's attention  
240 the "anti-homeless signs" that are on the Jonathan Daniels Trail. He continued that the recently

241 posted signs say “No camping, no alcohol,” which is targeted at the homeless population. The  
242 bottom has a phone number for homeless people to call for assistance. He finds it hypocritical  
243 that such a sign is on the “Jonathan Daniels Trail.” The sign seems to be sending the message of  
244 “Go away, homeless people.”

245  
246 Mr. Bohannon stated that the Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Department put up these signs, to  
247 be eye-catching, so people understand that per City Ordinance, there is no camping on City  
248 property and alcohol cannot be consumed in City parks. He continued that the signs are not  
249 targeting homeless people; they target people who use the parks without following the  
250 guidelines, and do not know the rules and Ordinances.

251  
252 Mr. Hutchinson asked how many of these signs were put up. Mr. Bohannon replied ten, in  
253 various locations such as Robin Hood Park, Goose Pond, Wheelock Park, and more.

254  
255 Vice Chair Filiault stated that there are other bodies in the City that deal with the issues Mr.  
256 Hutchinson is speaking of. Mr. Hutchinson could also speak to City Councilors.

257

258 **10) Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, July 11, 2022 at 5:00 PM**

259

260 There being no further business, Vice Chair Filiault adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

261

262 Respectfully submitted by,  
263 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

264

265 Reviewed and edited by,  
266 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

7/1/19- 6/30/20	HRC	KIF	7/1/20- 6/30/21	HRC	KIF	7/1/21- 6/30/22	HRC	KIF
<b>Balance 7/1/19</b>	\$ 4,574.00	\$ -	<b>Balance 7/1/20</b>	\$ 4,096.73	\$ 3,411.00	<b>Balance 7/1/21</b>	\$ 3,391.88	\$ 2,541.89
	This was entered at 4574.70							
<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>		
City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ 1,000.00	
Donations KIF		\$ 6,847.83	Donations KIF		\$ -	DONATIONS KIF		\$ 5,000.00
subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,847.83	subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ -	subtotal	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,847.83	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 500.00	\$ -	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>		
International Festival		\$ 3,436.83	International Festival		\$ 869.11	International Festival		\$ 5,500.57
			Pride Flags - 15	\$ 104.85		Pride Month	\$ -	
			Juneteenth Presenters \$200	\$ 800.00		Juneteenth	\$ -	
			Steve Schuch					
			Hadi Lanceric					
			Jonah Wheeler					
			Jalissa Rodriguez					
			Amina Jordan-Mendez	\$ 300.00				
Martin Luther King Day			Martin Luther King Day	\$ -		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -	
Peter Blood	\$ 500.00		Dr. Jim Waller					
KSC Dining	\$ 477.27							
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 977.27	\$ 3,436.83	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 1,204.85	\$ 869.11	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ 5,500.57
<b>Net 19-20</b>	\$ (477.27)	\$ 3,411.00	<b>Net 20-21</b>	\$ (704.85)	\$ (869.11)	<b>Net 21-22</b>	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (500.57)
<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 4,096.73	\$ 3,411.00	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 3,391.88	\$ 2,541.89	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 4,391.88	\$ 2,041.32