

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 9, 2023

5:00 PM

**Room 22,
Recreation Center**

Members Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair
Dr. Shaun Filiault, Vice Chair
Jan Manwaring (left at 5:51 PM)
Dr. Dottie Morris
Marti Fiske
Hunter Kirschner
Rabbi Daniel Aronson
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate
Councilor Catherine Workman (arrived at 5:05 PM)

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities
Director

Members Not Present:

Heidi Schwieger, Alternate
Dr. Mohammed Saleh

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. She read the HRC's statement: *"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."*

Roll call was conducted. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Ritu Budakoti is a voting member today. She continued that "feedback and decision on the draft of the executive summary of the RJCS Report" should be on the agenda.

Ms. Fiske made a motion to amend the agenda to include feedback on the executive summary. Dr. Morris seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that it will follow Budget Development and be the new #6.

Councilor Workman arrived at 5:05 PM.

2) Elections

Ms. Fiske made a motion to re-elect the current slate, with Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos as Chair and Dr. Filiault as Vice Chair. Dr. Morris seconded the motion.

Dr. Filiault stated that he cannot be the Vice Chair again. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is happy to retain her seat as Chair.

Dr. Morris nominated Mr. Kirschner for Vice Chair. Ms. Fiske seconded the nomination. Mr. Kirschner accepted the nomination.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if anyone else is interested in being considered for Chair or Vice Chair. (There was no response).

Ms. Fiske made a motion to elect Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos as Chair and Mr. Kirschner as Vice Chair of the HRC. Councilor Workman seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Approval of December 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Dr. Morris made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2022. Ms. Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Finance Report

5) Budget Development

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the Finance Report has a budgetary proposal for \$500 per event, other than the Keene International Festival (KIF), which is self-sustaining. She continued that the HRC has a balance on hand of about \$4,000. The recommendation was that each event be given a budget of \$500. If money does not get used for the event, it gets put back in the kitty for reallocation. The remaining \$2,000 would be for use at the HRC's discretion, but it would be a full-committee vote. They had talked about asking the City for a larger annual amount of money; Mr. Bohannon is handling that for the HRC. The HRC needs to vote on the proposal to have \$500 per event. If an event needs more than \$500, the event subcommittee would need to get sponsors and/or ask the HRC to use some of what is left.

Discussion ensued. Dr. Filiault stated that he does not think they could have sponsorships, because those donations would have to go through the City Council process, which complicates it. Mr. Bohannon explained the process for how monetary donations to the HRC (or other City boards or committees) are accepted through the City Manager and the City Council. He stated that the City Council would not say "no" to accepting the donations. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is fine with that (accepting donations to the HRC through the City process). Others agreed.

Dr. Filiault spoke of how Keene Pride will be doing multiple Pride events in 2023 so he does not see the need for the HRC to do a Pride Month event or use \$500; maybe it could be \$250 to co-sponsor an event. Discussion ensued. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that for the sake of equity,

she would not want to reduce one event's budget. She continued that no one knows how long Keene Pride will continue for. She would rather leave the \$500 for Pride Month in the HRC's budget, and put it back in the kitty if not used. Mr. Kirschner agreed. He continued that he thinks there is space for the HRC to do an educational event because the HRC's and Keene Pride's missions are different.

Mr. Kirschner made a motion to accept the proposed budgetary numbers. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that next on the agenda is feedback on the executive summary that Dr. Filiault drafted regarding the Racial Justice and Community Safety (RJCS) Report, and how to move forward with it. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that in thinking more about this, the HRC probably should not discuss it today since it was not publicly noticed on today's agenda. They should distribute the draft through next month's agenda packet. He continued that if anyone has comments about the document they can send those to him, and he will forward them to Dr. Filiault for review. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked that people send their comments only to Mr. Bohannon, not the whole HRC, because that would create a quorum and be in violation (of RSA 91-A).

6) Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB) Updates

Councilor Workman reported that when the MDEIB last met, they reviewed the Rapid Response statement. She continued that the Law Enforcement Subcommittee developed it, regarding how to get out in front of events in the Monadnock region, such as the hate messages in Westmoreland and church vandalism. The statement will go to the YMCA board of directors for approval, and once approved, the MDEIB can move forward with it. The MDEIB is still looking for an executive director, and are always looking for new members for the subcommittees as well. The MDEIB now has a Facebook page. Brief discussion ensued.

7) Acceptance of Committee Event Reports

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that they do not have any committee event reports. She continued that it would be good for the chairs of the subcommittees/working groups, including herself, to get into the habit of submitting event reports – even if it is just a couple lines. They also need to identify a chair for each working group, so they know who is responsible for each event.

8) Community Outreach

A) MLK Jr. Day – January 16th 10:00 AM Cheshire County Historical Society

Mr. Bohannon stated that the HRC is co-sponsoring the event with the Cheshire County Historical Society. He continued that it is Monday at 10:00 AM at the Historical Society. Jennifer Carroll will be hosting a conversation/presentation. People can RSVP to the Facebook event, which has a glitch that the City's IT Department is addressing. Discussion ensued about how the event is in-

person only and will not be recorded or streamed online. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos encouraged people to spread the word about the event and share the Facebook event.

B) Black History Month – movie “Till” February 16th 6:30 PM Colonial Showroom

Mr. Bohannon stated that at a previous meeting, Dr. Morris spoke about wanting the HRC to be involved with showing the movie “Till” at The Colonial or Keene Cinemas but that neither theater had plans to show it. He continued that he ran into Vicky Pittman (from The Colonial) at an event and shared what Dr. Morris had envisioned. After a lot of back and forth, the bottom line is that “Till” will come to the Colonial Showroom, February 16 at 6:30 PM. The movie will start at 7:00. Dr. Morris is working on getting a speaker related to the movie to introduce it at 6:30 and host a related discussion. Following the movie will be a Q&A session. There is a cost to the HRC. He knows a couple people who may be interested in sponsoring the event. The Colonial is working on a promotional package the HRC can do. The film itself is \$250 and the fee for the space is \$1,000. Thus, the HRC owes The Colonial \$1,250. Dr. Morris replied that they are going to split that, so it is \$650 for the HRC and \$650 for Keene State College. Mr. Bohannon stated that tickets will be \$5 each, because if they show the movie for free, people will get tickets and then not show up. Only approximately 118 people can be in the theater.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked what Mr. Bohannon needs from the HRC. She asked if they need to vote to commit those funds. Mr. Bohannon replied that the HRC has the money, because there is no fee for the MLK Jr. event at the Historical Society, so they could use some of that money for this purpose. He spoke of how this event (showing “Till”) fits well with the HRC’s mission and is something new for them.

Lengthy discussion ensued about the venue; the HRC’s budget; the ticket price of \$5; whether to charge money for the event or not; and if so, how much; and if not, how to prevent people from reserving their (free) tickets and then not showing up, so the seats actually are filled; and so on and so forth. Discussion ensued about how much money is owed to The Colonial, and what the cost would be to the HRC if they did not charge people for tickets. Councilor Workman noted that 118 tickets times \$5 equals \$590, and asked if the HRC could get a sponsor to cover the \$590. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that the HRC and KSC could split it. She continued that there is only one more HRC meeting before the event. She asked if the HRC is willing to assume that the HRC and KSC will each cover half the full cost, including half the cost of the tickets. Seating will be “first come, first served.” Discussion continued, and the HRC determined that their half of the cost, including tickets, would be approximately \$945.

Dr. Filiault made a motion to allot up to \$1,000 for the showing of “Till” at the Colonial Showroom on February 16, 2023. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he will reach out to some sponsors to see if they can reduce that cost. Discussion ensued about the possibility of having more than one showing of “Till,” potentially at

another venue, via KSC. Mr. Bohannon stated that they would have to work that out with Ms. Pittman. Dr. Morris replied that she will check in with her.

C) Community Survey

Mr. Bohannon stated that at the last meeting they brought forward the opportunity for the HRC to send out a 'community pulse' survey. He continued that this is something Lebanon, NH did. After the last meeting, he had two large grants due and then got the flu, which was followed by the holidays, so he did not get the HRC the information about this survey as he had planned to. He can have it ready for February for everyone to review.

Ms. Manwaring left at 5:51 PM.

9) New Business

A) 2023 Meeting Dates

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that some of the HRC's meeting dates for 2023 need to be rescheduled due to holidays. Discussion ensued.

Dr. Filiault made a motion to cancel the July meeting. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Dr. Filiault made a motion to move the September meeting to September 11. Mr. Kirschner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if there were any other dates to change. Hearing none, she stated that they will accept the rest of the calendar as is.

10) Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, February 6, 2023 at 5:00 PM

There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

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