

Allentown

*435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101*



Minutes

Thursday, November 10, 2022

6:00 PM

5th floor conference room

Human Relations Commission

Call to Order: 6:07pm-7:08pm
Pledge of Allegiance
Moment of Silence

Roll Call

Present: LaTarsha Brown, Queenette Echefu, Jean Raymond-Hoffman, Ciera Villalobos, and Shane´ J. Gill

Excused Absence: Janet Morillo, William Seng, Louis Holzman

Unexcused Absence: N/A

Remarks from the Chair/Commissioners: Introduced new student representatives to the commission.

Courtesy of the Floor: None

Approval of Minutes

Motions: Jean Raymond-Hoffman

Second: Queenette Echefu

Information Updates

Banquet Committee: The banquet committee has been dissolved.

Investigation Committee (Ciara Villalobos and Shane´ J. Gill): Completing draft for previous case assigned and edits to be completed tentatively by the next meeting on December 8th, 2022. Two questionnaires were received for complaints of discrimination. Information was not sufficient to determine whether the investigator could proceed. Reviews were completed and parties will be notified of the rationale for the decision by the HRC Investigator.

Outreach Committee (Louis Holzman, William Seng, and Jean Raymond-Hoffman): Safety Day.

HRC Investigator: Completing draft for previous case assigned and edits to be completed tentatively by the next meeting on December 8th, 2022. Two questionnaires were received for complaints of discrimination. Information was not sufficient to determine whether the investigator could proceed. Reviews were completed and parties will be notified of the rationale for the decision by the HRC Investigator.

HRC Officer: No updates identified at this time.

Old Business:

- Rotation for City Hall Meetings (1st and 3rd Wednesday of the Month) at 6:00pm

New Business:

- Partnership w/Allentown School District: We will collaborate with the new Chief of Diversity, Equity, and Advancement to explore opportunities in which HRC can advance the district's effort to promote DEI in academic, teaching, and training. Our primary focus is discrimination. We would be volunteering our time, knowledge, and skills in whatever areas may be requested. This would also include commissioners attending interviews for student reps annually, marketing HRC, and assessing opportunities to include historically marginalized students in volunteer positions in HRC OR at our events as they become available. If you are already employed by the district, this may be a conflict of interest and I will explore that further within the next week.

o Volunteers

- LaTarsha Brown
- Janet Morillo

- Partnership w/C.A.W.S.-We are creating a volunteer opportunity for youth that are part of the Community Alternative Work Services program with the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Commissioners will serve as mentors to these youth. Youth will be able to participate on committees

and at events to accumulate hours. These youth will also be able to create events based on their interests and problems they identify in the community to learn leadership skills and civic engagement. This is a vulnerable population. You will need to be passionate about reducing recidivism, social justice and advocacy, discriminatory practices in sentencing, and experiences of marginalized youth involved with the courts. If you are not committed to these causes, please do not sign up as these youth will be depending on us to be their allies. I will be meeting with their director tomorrow, 10/19/22.

- o Volunteers
 - Felicia Strong
 - William Seng
 - Illianys (Student Rep)
- Partnership w/Homeless Commission: We are collaborating with the homeless commission to do the following: (1) a qualitative research study on experiences of discrimination in housing from the perspective of residents/applicants, realtors/property managers, and attorneys in the City of Allentown, (2) using these findings to compare to data that the homeless commission has on chronic homelessness in the community, (3) advocacy in the community including scheduling dates for 1-2 hours to visit different sections of the city to interview/record persons suffering from these experiences, and (4) creating a proposal and budget to oversee or acquire property under a joint initiative to solve the housing crisis. We have explored asking for funding for a hotline to be shared between both commissions. There are two pending meeting dates. I will be asking the director about her comfort level including commissioners in the next two planning meetings. Nonetheless, if interested, respond.
 - o Updates: Scheduling open forum for landlords, tenants, and legal counsel or advocates involved in cases of discrimination
 - Anticipated start date is January 2023
 - o Volunteers:
 - Queenette Echefu
 - Shane´ Gill
 - Illianys (Student Rep)
- Community Partnerships: A team of 2-3 commissioners is needed to begin contacting potential partners in our community. Ideally, these persons will also serve on the outreach committee. Organizations whose mission and vision aligns with HRC have been identified in the strategic plan. A script would be developed to stimulate dialogue. This would include a potential luncheon in council chambers as an introduction.
 - o Grants Application Process
 - o Will hold on identifying commissioners
 - Will explore potential conflicts of interests and establish expectations and clauses on conflict of interest.
- Partnership w/Delaware Nation (Indian Tribe native to Lehigh Valley): Pending. Meeting on 10/20/22.
 - o Shane´ J. Gill
 - o Jean Raymond-Hoffman
- *Revising ordinances/bylaws: We are considering expanding our ordinances to address salient problems in Allentown. These ordinances were written in 1993. This will require at least 2-3 meetings for no more than 2 hours each (however, you will need to have read through the ordinances/bylaws to be reviewed prior to each meeting). The goal is to present these recommendations during the first council meeting in January 2023. 2-3 additional commissioners are needed.
 - o Queenette Echefu
 - o Shane´ J. Gill
- Student Liaison and School Board Representative Role
 - o Janet Morillo will serve as the Student Liaison
 - o LaTarsha Brown will serve as the School Board Representative
 - Clarification has been provided on the duties and responsibilities of the representative re-elected to represent the school board.

- Deferred HRC Applications
- Motion to Adjourn: Jean Raymond-Hoffman
Second: Queenette Echefu