

Laconia Human Relations
Special Meeting
June 16, 2020
3PM via Zoom

Agenda

Welcome and Roll Call

Election of Chair & Secretary

Review and Acceptance of December 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Review and Acceptance of June 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Financial Report (3rd Quarter Fiscal Year 2020)

Chairman's Report

My report is very simple:

- I believe the Multicultural Festival 2020 should be postponed to 2021.
- The second item goes to the heart of whether LHRC will remain relevant as a Mayor's committee or whether it should be disbanded?

Old Business

- Should Laconia Multicultural Festival – Next Year: Sept. 5th, 2020 be cancel?

New Business

- How do we respond to the cries for racial and social justice?
- Other business

Public Comment

Note: The meeting will be held online through Zoom and will begin 3pm although people are encouraged check in early and contact Glenn Smith, City of Laconia at 524-3877 x 225 or email at gsmith@laconianh.gov if you are having trouble connecting.

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Jun 16, 2020 02:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Human Relations Commission

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82157473893?pwd=ZXRYeWV4THg0Q1lUWlPUN05JeTQ2UT09>

Password: 606825

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13017158592,,82157473893#,,1#,606825# or +13126266799,,82157473893#,,1#,606825#

Or Telephone:

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Slavery and the New England Mills

In this time of CoVid-19 and George Floyd, it is finally time for Laconia to understand its part in the 400 years of racism in this country and how it is impacting our lives.

Last year, 2019, was the 400th anniversary of the landing of the first slave ship in what would become the United States of America.

“That was when a ship arrived at Point Comfort in the British colony of Virginia, bearing a cargo of 20 to 30 enslaved Africans. Their arrival inaugurated a barbaric system of chattel slavery that would last for the next 250 years. This is sometimes referred to as the country’s original sin, but it is more than that: It is the country’s very origin. – Jake Silverstein, New York Times Magazine, 12-20-2019”

I read this in the New York Times Magazine’s **1619 Project** after listening to their haunting podcasts. Since then my eyes have slowly been opening. I already knew that white Europeans started the slave trade but I steadfastly refused to fully comprehend its scope and the enormity of what of its effect on the country today. I have read stories of the worst of plantation atrocities. I have read *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving.

I have finally decided to speak out and admit that I have supported the myth of Laconia’s Garden of Eden Story. Laconia, along with all other early towns of New England, were complicit in the origins of slavery. The cotton for the Mills including the Belknap and Busiel Mills was planted, grown, and harvested by Slaves. Likewise the New England Mills and Banks are complicit in that they financed the southern plantations.

The impacts of slavery rebound on us today, tainting our attitudes to each other and the land we share. This brutalizing of a whole race of people is matched by the brutalizing of the land. New England Mills adopted the same brutal attitudes to their primary source of power even as they consumed the cotton grown by slaves.

The waters of New England used to teem with every known species of fish and some that are now extinct. Cod, alewife, and salmon were systematically destroyed by the Mills through their dams, their dyes and effluence. The New England landscape was systemically destroyed by overlogging and overgrazing. Native Americans offered time and again during the early years to teach White Europeans sustainable practices; instead, the First Americans were systematically exterminated and their land was expropriated and then destroyed.

Despite the now-neutered Clean Water Act by the Trump Administration, our lakes having been dying. New Hampshire and most cities have adopted a growth at any cost attitude to development. Business Lobbies are so strong that there has not been a serious effort to control growth in many years. The massive mansions and developments with huge, fertilized green lawns contribute to the non-point source pollution that is closing more and more beaches and lakes every year.

Tax cuts are used to justify regressive policies that keep housing unaffordable, environments decimated by understaffed governments, schools increasingly segregated for the haves and have-nots, and so on and so. This process of creating social divisions and wedge issues is the same attitudes as the laws that prevented slaves being allowed to read.

Four hundred years after Comfort Bay, this country is beginning to face its past and learn to go forward as brothers. Now is the time to look around and see that all of your neighbors are

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caring about you by their “social distancing.” Now is the time to care for these neighbors by organizing immediately and running for local, state, and national office. You have until June 12th to file for an office. It isn't just national office that is at stake! This is the decennium when the next batch of NH Legislators will get set the voting districts for the following ten years.

Now is the time to stand up and love your neighbor so we may all grow together and help one and other grow toward the light. Now is the time to resist the darkness and fight for truth and social justice!

David Stamps

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