

City of Laconia – Human Relations Committee

October 13, 2020

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

David Stamps welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Laconia Human Relations Committee. Committee member roll call was taken, a quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order at 3:04 pm. The Chair reviewed procedures related to public access to electronic meetings as required under Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present – Mayor Andrew Hosmer, Chair David Stamps, Carol Pierce, Rev. Judith Wright, David Osman, Janet Simmon, Matt Soza, Margaret Donnelly, Kate Bruchacova and Carrie Chandler

Excused – Dennis Bothamley

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Matt Soza, seconded by Judith Wright, to accept the minutes of the September 8, 2020 Laconia Human Relations Committee meeting. A vote was taken, and with no opposition, the minutes were accepted as written.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Values & Mission Statement

There was discussion about how to focus on human relation issues that directly affect the City of Laconia. There is concern regarding the city's homeless population. There is a city wide group that Len Campbell belongs to that is looking at what can be done in the short and long term. We have seen an increase in vandalism, bike thefts - which cannot all be linked to the homeless. There is a new taskforce meeting next week at City Hall via zoom which involves businesses, mental health, general health care, other non-profits to look closely at the numbers, where are the homeless coming from, how they are living and how as a community should we respond as bold action is needed. Reverend Judith Wright volunteered to join this group, representing the Human Relations Committee.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Martin Luther King Jr Celebration

The sub-committee outlined one way to celebrate MLK day by handing out “King bags” with essential items and including a mini-constitution declaring American rights and a focus on marketing the significance of the event. There was discussion about the project in terms of an outpouring of humanity and caring but does there need to be a stronger connection to MLK and what he stood for. There is much racial tension happening in our country and while any action is positive – we want to project purpose and impact within the community. There is a National Coalition that advocates for homeless, disadvantaged people and stresses Dr. Kings efforts to provide economic opportunity for all citizens. The importance of having a speaker was discussed and the chairman asked that ideas be emailed directly to him. The subcommittee will continue to work out the details for this event.

Review of Democracy Discussion

Discussion continued around democracy as an important issue in our culture - what makes democracy a democracy? The human relations side is not being heard. Inclusivity should be central to democracy. Violence is on the rise. There was discussion about what more this committee should be doing – including offering programs 3-4 times per year, more community awareness and discussion, more involvement with the schools (COVID has made things more challenging). Perhaps we could reach out to the Interfaith Council that works with people who are released from jail. The Critical Incidents Committee is being discussed as another way to support people within the city that are targeted by hate and racism. David Stamps offered to write a letter to the Editor about the struggles of this committee.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one present for public comment.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Judith Wright, seconded by David Osman, to adjourn the meeting; and with no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm by the Chair.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 3p via Zoom invite.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Chandler,
Recording Secretary

LACONIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MISSION

To:

- a) Cultivate a community-wide climate that does not tolerate prejudice of any kind which undermines the dignity of any person.
- b) Educate ourselves and our children about the presence and dehumanizing impact of any prejudicial attitudes that are currently at work in our community.
- c) Promote, in as many segments of our community life as is possible, policies and practices which encourage and demand equal opportunity and responsibility for all people.
- d) Proactively resist and publicly condemn any practices or incidents in our community which either result from or might encourage prejudice, intolerance, harassment and discrimination.

DRAFT