

Laconia Human Relations Committee

February 13, 2023 - Meeting 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 3:40 pm.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present – Chair David Stamps, Carol Pierce, Matt Soza, Trish Weatherbee, Janet Simmon, Rev. Judith Wright, Pat Wood, Linda Thanas, Heather Stanley and Carrie Chandler

Zoom – Mayor Andrew Hosmer, David Osman

Phone – Seifu Ragassa

Excused – Kay Anderson

III. OLD BUSINESS

Minutes Approval – **A motion was made by Matt Soza, seconded by Pat Wood, to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2023 Laconia Human Relations Committee; with no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

Sub-Committee Guidelines - David Stamps stated that all sub-committee meetings shall post an agenda 24-hours in advance (email to David and he will forward to Nancy Brown) – and provide written summary of the meeting, in particular any motions/decisions.

Sub-Committee Work:

Martin Luther King Jr Celebration – Rev. Judith reported that there was considerable favorable response to this year’s celebration program; including high attendance. The sub-committee had a meeting following to debrief and plan to meet again in March. Suggestions for next year include a gospel choir, involving school children and arranging for publicity the day of the event. Jan Katz, from Temple B’nai Israel, expressed her appreciation for the program via email; and invites the committee to collaborate on a Holocaust Remembrance Day program (Yom HaShoah) at the Temple. David Stamps and Carole Pierce will talk with Ira Keltz about how the committee can be of help.

Laconia Multi-Cultural Day – a meeting was held by the Multi-Cultural Festival Board along with interested volunteers. Rev. Judith, Board Secretary, emailed minutes of the meeting. Becky Guyer facilitated the meeting and there were a number of people who agreed to assume responsibility for various roles. There remains confusion around communication; including frequency of meetings, monthly updates of progress and/or issues and timely email response (suggestion made to cluster questions to Becky Guyer for response). There remains confusion with regards to the role of the Board vs. the Laconia Human Relations Committee – financial support for the operation as run by the Board? David Stamps will reach out to Len Campbell for direction.

Business Sticker Campaign – Carrie Chandler asked what kind of response committee members are receiving in terms of distributing stickers to Laconia businesses. Majority of the members have found the businesses to be very open to posting the free sticker that states “all are welcome and no acts of discrimination will be tolerated.” The plan is to distribute the 100 stickers by end of February – and at the March meeting decide if more stickers should be purchased.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Pride Flag – David Stamps informed the committee that there is resistance to hanging the Pride Flag during June (Pride Month) by the City Council. Committee members were in agreement that a strong show of support for the flag is needed. Rev. Judith Wright and Carrie Chandler offered to write a letter to the council on behalf of the Human Relations Committee in support of the flag. Mayor Andrew Hosmer is aware of the committee’s reaction to this.

Hate Crimes Forum – David Stamps spoke of a forum he recently attended with a panel of high-level speakers regarding hate crimes; he suggested bringing a forum to Laconia.

Zoom Issues - In an effort to minimize zoom technical issues, **Carrie Chandler suggested to have zoom participants log on 10-15 minutes prior to meeting and to request City Hall tech support be present to mitigate any communication issues prior to the meeting start time. Trish Weatherbee asked that the suggestion be a motion, seconded by Matt Soza; with no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

Beth Vachon of Lakes Region Mental Health would like to collaborate with our committee. It was suggested to invite Beth to attend a meeting to give a brief overview of LRMHC’s mission as it related to human relations and how we can partner together.

Next Meeting – we will review the committee’s mission and vision statements.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one present for public comment.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Rev. Judith Wright, seconded by Matt Soza, to adjourn the meeting at 4:53p; which passed unanimously.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 13, 2023, 3:30p, City Hall Room 200A and via zoom invite.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Chandler,
Recording Secretary