

CITY OF LACONIA – HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

March 19, 2019 - Quarterly Meeting

City Hall Chambers

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Leonard Campbell welcomed all and called the meeting of the Laconia Human Relations Committee to order at 3:02 pm. Committee member introductions were made and a quorum was established.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present - Chair Leonard Campbell, Carol Pierce, David Stamps, Rev. Judith Wright, Janet Simmon, Chris Adams, Dennis Bothamley, Carrie Chandler

Excused – Mayor Ed Engler, Kathy James, David Osman, Kate Bruchacova, Ali Hassan

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by David Stamps to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2018 meeting; it was seconded by Chris Adams. A vote was taken, and with no opposition, the minutes were accepted as written.

III. AGENDA

- Committee Reports:

- FINANCE

Len Campbell reported a balance of \$1,430.62 as of March 2, 2019 – which includes expenses of \$650 which were speaker and venue fees related to the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. Acceptance of the Financial Report will be deferred until the June meeting. Moving forward, hard copies will be made available for review and acceptance of the Finance Report. David Stamps will follow up to ensure that the format meets with city approval.

- LACONIA MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

David Stamps reported that the date for the Laconia Multicultural Festival is September 7th, 2019 (a change from September 14th). Plans to secure various entertainers are underway.

There is a new vendor form and a donation form on the website with PayPal option. An Amazon Smile Account is another way to support the festival mission. The Festival plans to request LHRC funds in the future. Their website is <http://laconiamulticulturalfestival.org/>

○ MARTIN LUTHER KING JR CELEBRATION

The MLKJ event, which focused on “what it is like to be black,” was postponed due to weather and was rescheduled for February 10th. Dotty Morris and Seifu Ragassa were inspiring and the feedback was very positive. Dan Carter’s music added a great deal to the event and there was plenty of food. The Unitarians had a presence from both Plymouth and Laconia. There was mention of a “Black Lives Matter” banner that the Unitarian Church from Plymouth has sponsored. Singer Reggie Harris (along with Greg) would be a great future performer. Rev. Judith Wright will look into potential cost which could perhaps be shared with other organizations.

○ IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

No report.

○ INTERNATIONAL FILM SERIES

Carol Pierce reported that the International Film Night, held at the Laconia Public Library on the first Monday of each month at 6:15p, is going strong with 20-30 attendees. The Japanese film “Dreams” will be featured on April 1st. It is a film about 8 dreams with different meanings to the world.

○ “MONUMENT” AD HOC

David Stamps and Carrie Chandler met with a local architect to discuss the project to get initial impressions. The concept was liked with no assistance offered. David has been researching expense related to working in granite, etc. The Ad Hoc Committee needs to regroup and a meeting will be scheduled in the near future. It was mentioned that Bev Lapham, Jeri Bothamley and Elaine Morrison may be able to provide some artistic inspiration. The goal is to come up with a proposal (or two) to share with the larger committee. Chris Adams suggested we think about the gateways of the city – to include some kind of welcoming and inclusive verbiage. Janet Simmon suggested we think about creating signs similar to what she has seen elsewhere which reflect tolerance by stating “Whoever you are, Where ever you are from, You are welcome here.” Janet and Denny Bothamley will gather information including photo and pricing and bring information to the next meeting. David Stamps requested that the “Monument “Ad Hoc be renamed as the “Communications Committee.”

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Review of Mission and Goals – there is great concern over what is happening all over the world as a result of fear, hate and intolerance. There was some discussion around how to generate increased activity around the (4) areas as identified in the Mission Statement found following these minutes.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Roberts Rule of Order – a motion to continue to run meetings in accordance with these rules was made by David Stamps and was seconded by Janet Simmon. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

The Laconia Public Library – sponsoring “Ask a Muslim Anything: A conversation with Robert Azzi” on Thursday, March 21, 2019 from 6:30-7:30 pm. Robert Azzi, an Arab-American Muslim who grew up in Manchester, NH, will share his personal story with people who are interested to learn more about Islam and the Muslim faith.

The Racial Justice Mission Group - will host acclaimed folksinger and educator Reggie Harris, on April 6th from 12 noon to 3 pm at the First Congregational Church, 177 North Main Street in Concord, for a workshop entitled “Windows of the Heart: Music and Stories of Race, History and Hope.” A light lunch will be available at 11:30 am. The hope is to create a better understanding around matters of racial justice and human rights through dialogue and song.

The Endowment for Health – is sponsoring a training entitled “Race and Equity in NH: Issues of Racism” to be held on Monday, April 29th, 8:30-5pm in Manchester at the Double Tree Hotel.

The Green Book – the Smithsonian Channel is running a documentary about the Green Book.

Committee Membership - Committee members, with an interest to continue serving on the Laconia Human Relations Committee, were asked to attest to this at City Hall for the upcoming year. The committee was pleased to welcome Dennis Bothamley to his first LHRC meeting. The committee expressed thanks to Chair Len Campbell as he resigns from the LHRC Committee after approximately seven years of service.

Facebook – Len kindly offered to maintain the committee’s Facebook page until someone can be identified to take this over. We are a global community, so in reaction to the most recent massacres, the idea of sending positive messages of peace and tolerance was agreed to by all. David and Len will work together on any committee response to such events. The group was asked to think about ways to respond to growing intolerance and violence in Laconia and beyond. It was suggested that the LHRC meeting dates/times be posted on Facebook.

Elections:

- **Recording Secretary - by unanimous vote, Carrie Chandler was asked to continue serving as recording secretary for the next year.**
- **Committee Chair – Carrie Chandler nominated and made motion that David Stamps serve as new chair; the motion was seconded by Rev. Judith Wright and with no opposition, passed unanimously.**

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Matt Soza – shared that there is a group of people in Laconia that would like to do something proactive in light of recent violent incidents. It was suggested that committee along with faith groups get together to make a public statement condemning violence on the basis of faith, race, etc. With the committee’s support, Rev. Judith and David will bring this idea to the local clergy group.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Rev. Judith Wright to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Denny Bothamley. With all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 4:14p by the Chair.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 18, 2019, 3p at Laconia City Hall.

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