

Laconia Human Relations Committee

March 20, 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 3:35 pm.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present – Chair David Stamps, Matt Soza, Trish Weatherbee, Janet Simmon, Rev. Judith Wright, Linda Thanas, Heather Stanley, Lois Kessin (Guest) and Carrie Chandler

Zoom – David Osman

Excused – Mayor Andrew Hosmer, Carol Pierce, Pat Wood, Kay Anderson, Seifu Ragassa

III. OLD BUSINESS

Minutes Approval – **A motion was made by Rev. Judith Wright, seconded by Janet Simmon, to accept the minutes of the February 13, 2023 Laconia Human Relations Committee; with no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

Sub-Committee Work:

Martin Luther King Jr Celebration – Rev. Judith Wright reported that there was a brainstorming meeting.

Laconia Multi-Cultural Day – Rev. Judith Wright reported that the LMC Board is responsible for oversight of this event; therefore, no need for a sub-committee or further discussion.

Business Sticker Campaign – Carrie Chandler asked how distribution of the stickers is going. For those who took stickers – please let her know where you are in the process. Once 100 stickers are distributed – we can discuss if there is need to purchase additional.

Motion was made by Matt Soza, seconded by Rev. Judith Wright, for the Laconia Human Relations Committee to support the Holocaust Program, with no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

- Saturday May 6th at 4p at the Congregational Church
- Program in process, approximate length 2 hours
- Is there a way to engage children?
- Volunteers needed
- Matt Soza will hand out flyers
- Friday night service at Temple B’Nai Israel – Rev. Judith will facilitate

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Committee Mission/Vision Statement - David Stamps gave an overview of the structure of the committee. We are the “conscious of Laconia through our honesty and integrity - and aim for balanced discussions.” Question – does the mission and vision statement represent us still? The committee agreed it does. There was discussion that the vision statement and mission be more positive in focus. It was also suggested that it is important to name things as they are. Trish Weatherbee and Linda Thanas will rework a few paragraphs for change consideration.

Lois Kessin (guest) – reached out to David Stamps for support following the graffiti at the former state school property (15-20 hate images were found) – the Daily Sun wrote a good article. Hate crimes are up in NH and all of New England by 383%. **Matt Soza made a motion, seconded by Rev. Judith Wright, to craft a response by the LHRC condemning these actions. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

Statement regarding hate images found at the former Laconia State School

The Laconia Human Relations Committee met today (3-20-23) and issued the following statement:

The Laconia Human Relations Committee condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the hate-filled images and messages painted over the last six months at the former Laconia State School property buildings. We support the investigations by the Laconia Police Department and the NH Attorney General’s office. These images are dehumanizing and are trying to create a climate of intolerance, intimidation, divisiveness and prejudice. We ask all of Laconia to join us in condemning these actions. Hate has no place in Laconia.

David Stamps

Chair, Laconia Human Relations Committee

Pride Flag – ran out of time to review proposal; to be discussed at next meeting.

Future Meeting – discuss Critical Incident Committee; involve others when an incident occurs.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one present for public comment.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by David Stamps at 4:59p.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 10, 2023, 3:30p, City Hall Room 200A and via zoom invite.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Chandler,

Recording Secretary