

CITY OF LACONIA – HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

June 19, 2018 - Quarterly Meeting

City Hall Chambers

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Leonard Campbell called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. Len welcomed all attending the Laconia Human Relations meeting. Committee member introductions were made and a quorum was established. Len introduced Leila Goldstein from NH Public Radio who was present and audio taping the meeting for a program.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present - Chair Leonard Campbell, Mayor Ed Engler, Carol Pierce, David Stamps, David Osmond, Kate Bruchacova, Rev. Judith Wright, Chris Adams, Ali Hassan, Janet Simmon, Kathy James, Carrie Chandler

Excused – all were present

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by David Stamps to accept the minutes of the March 20, 2018 meeting; it was seconded by Carol Pierce. A vote was taken, and with no opposition, the minutes were accepted as written.

III. AGENDA

- Committee Reports:

- FINANCE

Len Campbell reported a current balance of \$1,580.62 as of February 28, 2018. A request of \$2,000 has been submitted for the next fiscal year to support the committee's mission. The mayor raised a question about the need for this requested amount. Carol Pierce suggested we table this until later in the meeting when need may be presented under new business. David Stamps suggested we receive future financial reports in writing.

A motion was made by David Stamps to defer the acceptance of the financial report until review at the September meeting; it was seconded by Judith Wright. A vote was taken, and with no opposition, the motion carried.

○ LACONIA MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

David Stamps reported that the festival scheduled for Saturday, September 8th, 10a-4p, is on track. Becky Guyer, Executive Director, is in the process of lining up vendors and entertainment. All approvals from the city have been received. There is a need for volunteers, particularly the day of the event.

○ MARTIN LUTHER KING CELEBRATION

Committee members should be thinking about this event; there were no suggestions proposed. Len Campbell stated that planning should begin by September.

○ IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

Kate Bruchacova stated that the initiative was a 3 year grant that ran out in March and that a name change might be fitting. Kate is still able to perform some of the initiative functions; and will look for further funding to support the efforts of supporting foreign born individuals in the community who are experiencing difficult situations.

○ INTERNATIONAL FILM SERIES

Carol Pierce stated that the film nights, held at 6:15p on the 1st Monday of the month at the Laconia Public Library, are going well. The audience consists of 20-50 people depending upon the film. A break during the summer but movies will be announced and available each month in the library.

○ OTHER

Len Campbell had an email conversation (attached) with Mr. Jim Thompson about a dialogue to have a clear understanding of what the Laconia Concerned Citizens and the Human Relations Committee understands about the topic on Islam. There has been no agreement on time, place and format yet. Len will notify the committee members of any further correspondence received from Mr. Thompson.

There was discussion between committee members as to the value in such a meeting. It was agreed that should such a meeting occur, a member of the Muslim faith (ie. someone from the Islam Anti-Defamation League) should be in attendance.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- Committee members shared thoughts/statements about:
 1. What the Human Relations Committee means personally?
 2. Why did you accept membership?

3. What importance does this committee serve to Laconia/the region?

12 statements in total were given by committee members; those in writing (5) are attached.

- Monument – Carrie Chandler proposed the idea of a visual within the city of Laconia that represents the work of the Human Relations Committee and the message to others that the city welcomes all persons or all backgrounds, races, religions, sexual orientation, etc. David Stamps suggested a sculpture garden of diversity and involving the Opechee Garden Club. An ad-hoc committee was formed to explore this idea further and make a formal proposal to the committee (including budgetary needs) at a future meeting. Volunteers include: David Stamps, David Osman, Carol Pierce, Kathy James, Kate Bruchacova and Carrie Chandler (chair).

A motion was made by David Stamps to explore the idea of creating a visual or symbol that we welcome diversity among our citizens of Laconia; it was seconded by Kathy James. A vote was taken, and with no opposition, the motion carried.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Jerri Stanley of Laconia -

- Expressed that she touched by the thoughts and commitment of this committee; and the willingness of the group to struggle to accomplish the mission.
- Appreciates any attempts to let the community understand efforts that harm that mission.

Mr. Don House of Belmont -

- Encouraged and impressed by the committee members.
- Concerned that there are forces that want to spread miscommunication, hate and fear.
- Thinking beyond a monument/statue, a dialogue may be needed to question statements, challenge and take things head on so the community can move forward.

Margaret Donnelly

- Encouraged committee members to really look at the mission of the group and determine if a meeting with the CCG goes against the mission statement and what we are charged to do.

Mr. Bruce Cheney, Counselor Ward 1

- Stated that Jim Thompson has been in contact with him and that is why he was in attendance today. Mr. Cheney suggested that the committee have faith in the work being done and to meet with him, otherwise it may reinforce his group's argument.

Comment was made that the CCG has not brought their argument or what they wish to present public. David Stamps stated from a historical perspective, there have been other groups that work

in secrecy since the 1990s; The Human Relations Committee does not want to make the same mistakes. A monument can be a good visual/shine a light on what we believe.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Carol Pierce to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Janet Simmon. With all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 4:44p by the Chair.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 18, 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.

LHRC – Why Me?

I believe in the dignity and worth of all men and women regardless of their beliefs, sexual orientation, skin color, abilities or religion. I believe a community is defined by the best in us and the worst in us. Since the mission of the Laconia Human Relations Committee is to support the best in us I therefore choose to support the LHRC.

I also believe that the majority of people of all faiths are good and honorable people. I understand that sometimes even good people either through ignorance, coercion, fear or misunderstanding perpetrate bad acts. I don't condemn either their religion or their country. Since the mission of the Laconia Human Relations Committee's mission is to support and promote tolerance, kindness and respect, I choose to support this committee.

What does serving on the Human Relations Committee mean to me personally?

An honor to serve and hopefully be helpful to the community I am a part of now.

I believe in the goal of this committee --"to cultivate a community wide climate that does not tolerate prejudice of any kind which undermines the dignity of any person. I have tried to live my life in accord to such values for many years, including when I served as a supervisor of chaplains of all faiths in four of Philadelphia's main hospitals. I believe in not tolerating prejudice because of a person's race, religious orientation, sexual orientation, nor gender orientation.

I have raised four adults, two of whom I gave birth to and are Caucasian, and we adopted two children of color at birth. Today I have five grandchildren of mixed races (part Native American, Part Japanese American, and Part African American) and one daughter who is a lesbian.

In terms of my religious beliefs, to uphold the inherent worth and dignity of every person is one important principle of my UU faith. This principle seems to be in sync with the stated goal of the Human Relations Committee.

Of what importance is this committee to Laconia and the region?

To support diversity is to help grow this community into the 21st century.

On my June 10th order of worship I had the following quote from Senator Robert Kennedy:
"Ultimately America's answer to the intolerant person is diversity, the very diversity which our religious freedom has inspired."

Since the stated goal of this committee is to not tolerate prejudice of any kind, helping to grow diversity in Laconia is a key to ending intolerance.

In addition, I suspect that jobs not filled now would be filled if there were more a climate of acceptance of diversity within Laconia. If intolerance reigns, then Laconia will lose out on the richness that diverse ways of living can bring to enliven a community, and also lose out on workers willing to fill jobs that now remain vacant, such as in the restaurant and tourist industries, for example. ☺

Bottom line for me personally is that I want to live in a community where my family, and members of my religious community -both of which are multicultural and diverse, can live with others in harmony as well as celebrate the richness of such diversity in our midst.

I moved to NH from metropolitan DC and chose Laconia because of the diversity in this city. I saw how people from all socio/economic groups and all nationalities were accepted and assisted as they assimilated into Laconia and became part of the community. After I moved here I was impressed with the way Chief Adams and his staff worked with everyone for a strong community and the well being of all. It is a privilege for me to serve on this committee that works to encourage openness and to protect each and every person from fear and misunderstanding. I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. Not literally since we were so poor we did not have running water in our home. However, I had the TICKET. I was white and born in the United States. I did not know as a child how my ancestors came to be on this land (some in 1620). I did grow up knowing that we are all human beings. I knew that every single one of us is precious, valuable, worthy of life, containing the same seed of humanity that I have.

I am honored to be on the human relations committee and do my part to encourage understanding among all who live here and to have the privilege to meet and work with diverse residents of Laconia. The activities of the Human Relations Committee encourage engagement and understanding, the casting out of fear, the building of respect.

The Laconia Human Relations Committee serves as an eye opener for some, an enriching experience for some, an opportunity for better understanding and stronger community for all of us.

Janet Simmon
20 Shore Drive, Laconia

I joined this committee – because Carol Pierce is a member of the board at LRMHC where I work – and the agency wants to be at the table regarding issues that affect our clients' daily lives.

It may have been another meeting I was actually supposed to join, but I attended the Human Relations Committee and was then nominated by the Mayor. I am also a member of the Multi-Cultural Day planning committee.

Why is this committee important to me and why do I wish to stay on?

A little bit about me. I'm 50 years old. I was born in Laconia. I am a true native. I chose to work and raise my family in Laconia. I didn't grow up knowing many people with diverse backgrounds. I attended a white school (there was one black student who attended my senior year) and a white church. So, when my son was born 18 years ago, I made a conscious decision to send him to a pre-school where there was diversity among the kids and teachers (racially, ethnically, socio-economically, etc.). I wanted my son to just see kids/people. I wanted him to embrace the individual differences in people, to see the beauty in that. The first sign he gave me that he really understood this... was when my step-daughter brought home a friend from school who had one missing arm. It struck me that my son never once said "hey mommy, why doesn't that boy have an arm." It was like he didn't even notice.

The world is full of all kinds of people. There is good and bad in all classes, races, religions, etc.

I like to think of myself as a good Methodist. I was put on this earth to do as much good as I can, for as many people as I can, for as long as I can. Tempted as it may be, I am not here to judge others. I am not here to fear others. I am here to love others.

I want the city of Laconia to be a safe and welcoming place to all.

I see the role of this committee is to help the community be mindful that the City is more than any one person, race, or religion – it is about all persons.

Inherent worth of the dignity of all human people. Period.

This committee is important to me because of the historical inheritance we all have and I want others to know so that this community enjoys

Preamble to the US Constitution – Mission Statement

“in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity”

Today is Juneteenth: a day that commemorates almost 2 ½ Years after the Emancipation Proclamation that slaves in Texas were informed they were free.

**There is a monument to that at the entrance to NYC in the Harbor – The Statue of Liberty
The New Colossus**

BY EMMA LAZARUS

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

June 20 is World Refugee Day

Refugees are vulnerable and in need, and are often misunderstood and maligned, and often have very little or nothing of their possessions and little food, they often have to leave their homes with nothing or with what they can carry. They suffer cold, hunger, trauma, despair, disease, violence and loss. The awareness day is to help public understanding of refugees as well as raising support and help.

I hope I can use my white, male privilege to make Laconia a better place for all these examples and reasons.

From: Leonard Campbell lcampbell@nh-cc.org
Subject: Fwd: Leonard Campbell, Chairman, LHRC: Leonard Request for Dialogue Proposal from CCG
Date: June 18, 2018 at 12:37 PM
To:
Bcc: Ali Sapry kysiali@yahoo.com, Carol Pierce newdynam@aol.com, Carrie Chandler cchandler@genesisbh.org, Christopher Adams adamschris195@gmail.com, David S. Osman dso@mlolaw.com, David Stamps dbstamps@dbstamps.com, Kathy James KJames@genesisbh.org, Janet Simmon scd_md@yahoo.com, Kate Bruchacova kbruchacova@lrpnh.org, Mary Jane Hoey maryjanehoey@metrocast.net, Matthew Canfield mcanfield@laconiapd.org, Edward Engler ed@laconiadailysun.com, Rev. Judith E. Wright revjudithwright@gmail.com



Per last December's motion that all communications be shared with the board, here is an email strand of a conversation with Mr. Thompson. I will report this as "the email", tomorrow.

He has not responded since June 4.

See you tomorrow at 3PM!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jim Thompson <jthompson@metrocast.net>
Subject: Leonard Campbell, Chairman, LHRC: Leonard Request for Dialogue Proposal from CCG
Date: June 4, 2018 at 1:25:41 PM EDT
To: Leonard Campbell <lencampbell2013@gmail.com>

Hello Leonard, Sorry for the delay in response to your 5/19/18 email.

I've been pondering on what the reply should be.

Today I met with the CCG and from the discussions the task

of preparing a reply to your email of 5/19/18 was delegated to a team..

I will transmit the response to you when it is available.

Stand by.
Best Regards,
Jim Thompson, Leader CCG.
528-2283

On 5/19/2018 9:43 AM, Leonard Campbell wrote:
Jim.

I would propose to have the dialogue with members of the Laconia Human Relations Committee and the greater community at an extraordinary meeting of the Committee. As an extraordinary meeting attendance will be voluntary. And I think you will find the attendees will continue to show the same respect and courtesy that the Committee always shows. The event is an opportunity to learn.

I would hope that an understanding of what the CCG understands as its foundational principles about Islam will be shared. Inshallah.

I do not want to rehash the grievances that the CCG continues to make at the regular Human Relations Committee Meetings.

At the end, I hope that the attendees will have a clear understanding of what the CCG and the Human Relations Committee understands about the topic on Islam that you continue to not define.

The Human Relations Committee will be briefed on the emails that we are exchanging, as that is required by motion.

I've invited a dialogue. So far all I see is posturing and no substance as to what you and the CCG would like to have for a dialogue. Without those elements I can't understand an agenda. I will not ask the Human Relations Committee to participate in anything other than a structured dialogue that will allow the attendees to have a clear understanding of what the CCG and the Human Relations Committee understands about a topic you are asking to present but have yet to outline.

And please don't ask me to presume to understand what that is.

Look forward to hearing from you. Ramadan Mubarak!

On May 19, 2018, at 5:08 AM, Jim Thompson <jthompson@metrocast.net> wrote:

Hello Leonard, Ref your request to CCG for a "proposal for a dialogue with you?, or can we assume you mean the entire membership of LHRC?

In recent discussions with CCG members the conclusion was reached that there needs to be more substance to your request for a dialogue, considering the fact that 15 months

ago, (March 2017) at the first 2017 regular meeting of LHRC, CCG requested a separate meeting with members (all members) of LHRC to discuss one issue at that time. That

issue was the fact that LHRC invited Muslims to speak at the MLK Christian event January 15, 2017. That request was flat denied by you and since then CCG has been

restricted/constrained to "one way" communications(from CCG to LHRC) in 5 minute "bullet oral statements" at Regular LHRC meetings. Written correspondents in emails and

letters have received little or no response...except to reflect "no". Simple reasonable requests...have been ignored. Ref issue of correct minutes.

So, if indeed CCG agrees to again attempt to have a productive dialogue with LHRC (not just the Chairman, the entire LHRC),

here's some questions that may help achieve that:

1) What will be the process? Will there be

- a) meetings with just Leonard?
- b) Meetings with a committee of LHRC?
- c) Meetings with Leonard and the entire LHRC committee?
- d) Will other parties, such as the Mayor be involved?
- e) If there are meetings, how will an Agenda be developed and how will that

Agenda be developed?

2) Does the entire LHRC membership (all of them) have knowledge of this email exchange (Jim and Leonard) on a "dialogue" and will the entire LHRC team support the effort? Will they come listen and participate in a friendly dialogue and reflect seriously on the views of the CCG members.

There will likely be more questions later, ...but let's have an email exchange on these questions for now and see where we might go.

Sincerely,
Jim Thompson, Leader,
CCG
603-528-2283
jthompson@metrocast.net

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: Leonard Campbell, Chairman, LHRC Follow Up Email to Jim T 5-10-18 - Status of Dialogue With CCG

Date: Thu, 10 May 2018 10:52:48 -0400

From: Jim Thompson <jthompson@metrocast.net>

To: Leonard Campbell <lencampbell2013@gmail.com>

Good morning Leonard, thank you for the follow up asking update on status of your proposed Dialogue with CCG members.

I was just about to send you an email...

advising you that the schedule to meet and talk with the CCG members is delayed until next week...when I will then be able to have the discussion with CCG Members.... so...I won't have any input for you until 5-14 or could be as late as 5-18.

Best Regards,
Jim Thompson.
603-528-2283

On 5/10/2018 9:28 AM, Leonard Campbell wrote:
.Jim.

I'll look forward to what you propose for a dialogue.

On Apr 21, 2018, at 2:21 PM, Jim Thompson <jthompson@metrocast.net> wrote:

Hello Leonard,

It's Saturday 4-21-18 -18, sorry for the delay in response to your email of 3-29-18.

On the issue of the minutes of Sept 19, 2017 being incorrect and your method of just recording the CCG public statements made in the minutes of the March 20, 2018 (5 months

later) meeting that you believe correct the prior mistakes made in Sept 19 LHRC minutes; it does not correct the mistake made some 5 months prior.

However, at this point we will consider this issue closed and move forward.

On your suggestion for a dialogue. Several key CCG members are on vacation until after May 10 and we will need to discuss with them their views prior to a response.

So, stand by, you will hear from me after May 10.

In the meantime, let us remember that CCG's original Mission in contacting the LHRC was to open a dialogue to provide education/information/knowledge on

Islamic Doctrine. That will most likely be where any dialogue should begin, along with other issues raised by CCG in the 12 months of attending LHRC meetings.

Thank you for the contact on this subject...more on this after May 10.

Best Regards,
Jim Thompson, Leader
Concerned Citizens Group
603-528-2283
jthompson@metrocast.net

Memo from Leonard Campbell to J. Thompson dated 3-29-18...by email.

Jim,

Happy Easter!

The September 19 LHRC minutes have been discussed and the current draft minutes reflect what happened and that is enough. I will not ask for any more revisions. As far as I am concerned, the minutes are corrected.

If you wish to propose a framework for a dialogue, please let me know.

<jthompson.vcf>



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<jthompson.vcf>

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s/Len
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Moving Lives Forward

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