

Meeting of New Jersey Human Relations Council

December 16, 2020

The virtual meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held on December 16, 2020 using Zoom Video Conferencing software.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: The meeting was called to order by Ashton Burrell at 10:01.

Reading of Public Meeting Act.

Each person present introduced themselves.

HRC Officers in Attendance: Ashton Burrell, Chairman, Yumiko Mishima, Vice Chairwoman, Karen Positan, Treasurer.

Those serving on the Advisory Group and guests in attendance were as follows: Binyanin Newmark, Donald Beetham, Lisa Burke, Theresa Cannon, Claudia Demitro, Dr. Denalerie Johnson-Faniel, John Farinella, Vincent Funelas, Heather Hadley, Maurice Hart, Amy Heath (DCA), Tonya Hopson, Edward M. Kerr, Francis Koch, Jennie Lamon, Stephen Landfield, David Leonardis, Esther Suarez, Joe Santagata, Tisha Leonardo-Santiago, John Wenz.

The Minutes of the October 21, 2019 meeting were read and approved.

Chair's Report: Happy Holidays. Looks forward to building up the HRC and bring more people in. Thank you to everyone for their commitment, dedication and working together as an HRC family.

Advisory Board Report: There was no meeting today. Union County reported that it is not as active as before the virus but Human Relations is keeping abreast of current events.

Old Business: Open Nominations for secretary: The Board has been trying to get nominations to the Governor's Office. Send an email if you are interested in being a member of the Council. The Board will reach out when resumes are appropriate. Statutes on duties will be sent out to everyone.

Reactivation of some of the towns' HRCs: Lists are being drawn up. The State Human Relations Council is like a parent organization. It is important to get the State Council running well so it can better help local groups. Some County prosecutors have sent lists of people involved. Claudia is still waiting to hear from the County Prosecutor's offices in Atlantic, Essex, Morris, Sussex and Union. Emails are outdated. Steve Landfield volunteered to contact Jennifer Williams in the Morris County prosecutor's office.

New Business:

2021 Goals: Ashton would like more input on goals for the HRC. There is much knowledge and talent on the commission that can be used in virtual meetings to help create bridges to communities and people we would not be able to reach normally. The HRC can provide resources. Yumika, Karen and Claudia can have an impact virtually.

John Wenz noted that the HRC should keep a close eye on COVID inoculations. What are the issues and what are the problems.

David Leonardis reported that the number of BIAS incidents against the Black community has skyrocketed. The 2018 figure was more than other years. In 2020, the number between January and December 1 was 650 surpassing 2018 against all communities. The number of zoom bombings continues to increase with comments directed at the Black community. The Black students are victims of the bombing like other students but it is directed to them. The Office of Criminal Justice has polled the county prosecutors to understand the extent. They are waiting for more data.

Denalerie Faniel mentioned that the Outreach Liaisons will be partnering with Heather Hadley around youth BIAS incidents specifically around human trafficking and cyber security. Event coming in January: Stand up against hate campaign. "Say Their Names" traveling museum exhibit will be coming to New Jersey.

The Division on Civil Rights and the Division of Criminal Justice have worked together on a program where anyone can report a BIAS incident online. Log in to NJ BIAS and leave comments. <<https://bias.njcivilrights.gov/en-US/>>

Presentation by Tonya Hopson: Showed a video called "Race in America: Holy Post". The video began with the fact that Black households on average have 60% of the wealth of white households and explored the historical roots of that inequity.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGUwcs9qJXY&feature=youtu.be>)

Lisa Burke spoke about the Judiciary efforts to engage community stake holders as well as its employees. This includes discussions on race among employees. Supreme Court Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement which recognizes the growing diversity of the State. The Committee advises locally about access to the courts. Community engagement is multi-dimensional including listening to communities rather than just telling.

<(<https://njcourts.gov/public/access/minority.html?lang=eng>)>. On June 5 the court issued a statement on the killing of George Floyd. Then on July 16 it announced an action plan to ensure equal justice with nine areas for reforms for

next year including greater diversity of juries and to reduce barriers to equity for juveniles. An ambitious program has been made for 2021.

Heather Hadley noted that she is a member and former chair of the newly renamed Mercer County Minority Concerns Committee.

A list of HRC dates for 2021 meetings will be sent out.

Some comments and links were left in the chat log:

Tisha Leonardo-Santiago contributed a link to the New Jersey Bias Investigation Access System. < <https://bias.njcivilrights.gov/en-US/>>

Danalerie Faniel recommended a book Human Relations Commissions : Relieving Racial Tensions in the American City by Valerie Martinez-Ebers and Brian Calfano, <https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/human-relations-commissions-relieving-racial-tensions-in-the-american-city_brian-calfano_valerie-martinez-ebers/25199775/item/41343754/?mkwid=Vp0rZzwJ%7cdc&pcriid=11558858428&pkw=&pmt=be&slid=&product=41343754&plc=&pgrid=3970769502&ptaid=pla-1101002859940&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Bing+Shopping+%7c+History&utm_term=&utm_content=Vp0rZzwJ%7cdc%7cpcriid%7c11558858428%7cpkw%7c%7cpmt%7cbe%7cproduct%7c41343754%7cslid%7c%7cpgrid%7c3970769502%7cptaid%7cpla-1101002859940%7c&msclkid=76dd7ce2d58b1adef3d42338fe5a8981#idig=41343754&edition=26929470>. It also is available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Danalerie Faniel added a call to NJ's young people, 25 and under, to submit a creative "hashtag", artwork, or video that will inspire others to stand up against hate!

Please visit the #NJCivilRights student campaign's website for details: < <https://www.nj.gov/oag/dcr/ybtf-student-competition/index.html>>

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08.