

## Meeting of New Jersey Human Relations Council

February 17, 2021

The virtual meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held on February 17, 2021 using Goto Meeting Conferencing software.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance:** The meeting was called to order by Ashton Burrell at 10:03.

Reading of the Public Meeting Act.

Attendees introduced themselves, along with their organizations, in the chat log.

**HRC Officers in Attendance:** Ashton Burrell, Chairman.

**Those in attendance were as follows (reverse alphabetical order):** Bryn Whittle, *Director of Community Engagement, Office of the Attorney General*; Reisa Sweet, *Ocean County Human Relations Commission*; Joe Santagata, *NJ HRC*; Thomas A. Parker; Binyanin Newmark, *Ocean County Human Relations Commission*; Ian Mosley, *NJ State Democratic Committeeman (Camden County)*; Rowena Madden; Tisha Leonardo-Santiago, *A.G.'s Office Division on Civil Rights*; David Leonardis, *Division of Criminal Justice*; Chiqueena Lee; *NJ DOC*; Steve Landfield, *former NJHRC member and former Advisory Board member and Chair*; Jennie Lamon, *Assistant Director of Government Relations*; Francis A. Koch, *Sussex County Prosecutor - CPANJ (alternate representative)*; Tonya Hopson, *Judiciary EEO/AA Chief*; Kimberly K. Holmes, *Dept. of Community Affairs*; Heather Hadley, *Mercer County Prosecutors Office*; Hon. Glenn A. Grant; Vincent Funelas, *Office of Volunteerism*; **Claudia Joy Demitro**, *Division of Criminal Justice*; Lisa Burke, *New Jersey Judiciary Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Program*; Don Beetham, *Highland Park Historical Commission*.

The Minutes of the December 16, 2019 meeting were read and approved with two corrections.

**Chair's Report:** Ashton said that he is ready to get to work, so let's get to work.

**Advisory Board Report:** There was no Advisory Board meeting today.

**Old Business:**

**Vacancies:** The Board is still waiting for responses in order to reach full representation. Claudia reported that Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin has appointed two Assembly Members as well as three members of the public. The Governor is committed to the cause but has made no promises.

**Reactivization of local HRCs:** Ashton has heard from South Brunswick and Metuchen. Steve Landfield's efforts has resulted in a letter from the Morris County HRC; Ashton read the letter. The HRC in Morris was in the process of reorganizing. That is now completed and the group looking forward to working with the State HRC. Claudia Demitro will send Steve Langfield the information he needs to contact Hudson County.

### **New Business:**

**2012 Goals:** Goals are still being created for 2021 to allow for more activities especially concerning equity and equality. Ashton noted that everyone attending has special talents.

Zoom calls at educational institutions are increasingly being "bombed". Chairman Burrell read from a letter from the Alpha fraternity. The incident was reported in a NJ.com article concerning the interference with Rutgers Alphas and NAACP Black History Month activities. (<https://www.nj.com/education/2021/02/rutgers-black-history-events-disrupted-by-racist-zoom-bombings-school-says.html>). Ashton asked Dave Leonardis whether the HRC could work with Criminal Justice to create an educational presentation for colleges and universities. Dave Leonardis remarked that they could work together and reminded the Council that these zoom bombings by hate groups are on the rise.

**Vaccinations:** Steve Langfield is working as a vaccination volunteer. He brought up the fact that wealthy white communities are doing well while vaccination efforts in other communities are lagging. . An article in NY Times on disparities in NYC Vaccination effort: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/16/nyregion/nyc-covid-vaccine-zip-codes.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap>). Can the HRC do something to help educating communities where vaccinations have fallen behind? Vincent Funelas divulged that his group had just submitted a grant proposal to the Department of Health to serve tribal communities. He suggested that Steve Landfield might want to look at possible grant opportunities. Tisha Leonardo Santiago added a link to the Center for Disease Control & Prevention COVID page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>

Claudia Demitro later emailed the link to the announcement of the launch of a community-based vaccination partnership to provide equitable access of the COVID-19 vaccine to underserved communities throughout New Jersey: <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210212b.shtml>

**Judiciary Community Engagement Program:** Lisa Burke shared a few informational updates.

Virtual procedural and legal information seminars include child support, expungement, and divorce. In addition the courts are offering diversity, inclusion and elimination of bias and legal information programs for attorneys. Calendar of Community Outreach and Public Engagement Events <https://njcourts.gov/public/ombudspubevents.html>.

There is a monthly program called Tools for advising equity, engaging in the elimination of bias. These programs are free of charge for attorneys who wish to attend. Pre-registration is required. Initial Calendar of Diversity, Inclusion, and Elimination of Bias Continuing Legal Education Programs <https://www.njcourts.gov/attorneys/assets/listclecourses.pdf?c=9Wu>

As part of transparency the Supreme Court periodically publishes reports, proposals, and recommendations it has received for public comment. Among the new initiatives are some additional; jury selection questions, some additional instructions to juries regarding implicit bias and just impartiality. There are 12 recommendations from the community engagement program. Reports, Proposals, and Recommendations published for Public Comment <https://www.njcourts.gov/courts/supreme/reports.html>; and the Judiciary Insights installment for Black History Month <https://youtu.be/tL7YPEMAkfE>

Judiciary has published a Black History Month installment of insights (youtube series regarding cultural diversity). Judiciary along with National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts is co-sponsoring a Black History month zoom webinar on Monday, February 22 from 2-4 pm featuring Kevin Richardson of the Exonerated 5. It will be a conversation about wrong conviction, issues of equal protection and due process. For more information on this Black History Month Program featuring Kevin Richardson please visit <http://www.national-consortium.org>. The program is free and open to the public but virtual seating is limited so pre-registration is required.

Ashton Burrell urged everyone to think of what talents they might have to help connect with people throughout the State of New Jersey. He mentioned drawing as a skill that would be helpful.

**Ocean County:** Binyanin Newmark announced that the Ocean County HRC together with the prosecutor's office is hosting a youth anti-bias initiative panel on February 18 to be used by different communities. It will be moderated by Ocean County Prosecutor Bradley D. Billhymer. Reisa Sweet noted the event will be focused on the youth, what the youth are experiencing. From there the HRC will be able to plan their own program toward their greatest needs. Bryn Whittle added the 2121 Program link to the event: <https://ocponj.gov/21-21/>. Reverend Simmons, a member of the Ocean County HRC, has begun an initiative for people to make contact by just saying "Hello". Members will be wearing hats with the words "Say Hello".

**Aviation:** Ashton Burrell mentioned a program by the Alpha Aviation about opportunities on the world of flight including flight lessons, simulation, drone classes. A flyer for the event was later sent out by Claudia Demitro:



The flyer features the Alpha Aviation logo in the top left corner, which includes a stylized 'A' with a wing and the text 'ALPHA AVIATION'. To the right of the logo, the text 'AND THE ZONE 6 TEEN CENTER' is displayed in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below this, a light blue text box contains the following text: 'Will be joining forces with Alpha Aviation to bring you unique and amazing opportunities in the world of flight. This presentation will discuss how we will look to work with Alpha Aviation with flight lessons, drone classes and simulations to bring you closer to your goal of making six figures in this industry. Don't miss out on this session to learn how to take advantage of these opportunities and learn more!'. Below the text box are two photographs: on the left, a man and a woman in blue Alpha Aviation polo shirts are smiling; on the right, a woman in a blue Alpha Aviation polo shirt is standing next to a small white aircraft. At the bottom of the flyer, a dark blue banner contains the text 'Save the Date! February 17th 2pm' in a white serif font, followed by the Zoom link 'https://zoom.us/j/99942561836?' and the password 'pwd=NmtGaWJRNHc4WjlTVIRhYVNIcm5iUT09' in a white sans-serif font.

**ALPHA AVIATION** AND THE **ZONE 6 TEEN CENTER**

Will be joining forces with Alpha Aviation to bring you unique and amazing opportunities in the world of flight. This presentation will discuss how we will look to work with Alpha Aviation with flight lessons, drone classes and simulations to bring you closer to your goal of making six figures in this industry. Don't miss out on this session to learn how to take advantage of these opportunities and learn more!

Save the Date! February 17th 2pm

[https://zoom.us/j/99942561836?](https://zoom.us/j/99942561836?pwd=NmtGaWJRNHc4WjlTVIRhYVNIcm5iUT09)  
pwd=NmtGaWJRNHc4WjlTVIRhYVNIcm5iUT09

**2121 Program:** Bryn Whittle noted that the Ocean County program was part of the Attorney General's 2121 program (21 counties, 21<sup>st</sup> century policing program). All of the county prosecutors present programs significant to our New Jersey communities. Francis Koch has done an amazing job in Sussex County. All country prosecutors have used the virtual platforms for webinars, etc. Presently the programs are centered around the youth bias task force report. Bryn Whittle will send more information about the programs so that members can attend or get the word out about programs in their area.

Francis Koch added that the rules for use of force have been continuing to change or be updated. The Attorney General and prosecutors previously opened the meetings to communities around the State so they could have input into the

use of force directives. Law enforcement is becoming even more inclusive. The perception must be that policing is inclusive.

Claudia Demito sent out the list of meetings last week. The next meeting will be in March. It is the same "goto" link for all the meetings

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53.