

Freehold Human Relations Advisory Committee (HRAC) Meeting

January 11, 2024

In-person attendance: Carrie Conger, Jenny Conger, Councilman Adam Reich, Christine Gregory, Sgt. Santana, Claire Morales, Rev. Ron Sparks, Margaret Rogers, Wanda Richards-Clarke, Elisha Carter (by phone); Not in attendance: Faith Edwards, Joanna Connelly, Wagner Menendez,

Meeting called to order 6:05pm

Committee Reorg – Carrie welcomed back all reappointed committee members and committee was tasked with appointing/reappointing committee leadership. No other members were interested in being chairperson and Carrie agreed to continue for one more year. Wanda was nominated to be Vice Chairperson by Jenny and Margaret seconded. Wanda was unanimously approved. Claire was nominated to be Secretary by Ron and Carrie seconded. Claire was unanimously approved. Carrie reminded committee members that we have vacancies that can be filled on the committee and encouraged current members to reach out to their networks to help bring on new members and to have them fill out the online inquiry form.

Developing 2024 Activities – Committee discussion on what activities to plan and/or partner with others. Margaret reaffirmed the importance of focusing on inclusivity and community building, noting that the local and national political climate in 2023 made it clear that there is still division that exists, but also opportunities to expand dialogue to work on closing those gaps. Margaret continues to work on the DE&I programming project with Nye and will keep the committee updated. Jenny suggested the importance of getting people from different agencies, communities, agencies, etc. that are already working on projects, having a chance to talk together and work together. Wanda reiterated the benefit of getting community leaders at the table to talk about ways to collaborate in order to reach a larger audience. Ron suggested working with the Monmouth County Diversity Alliance to collaborate on something like a Unity Day. Margaret agreed that this would be another good resource. Ron suggested another collaboration with law enforcement and/or first responder services, sharing that he will soon be sworn in as the Borough Chaplain. Wanda and Sgt. Santana discussed benefits of the Youth Academy that was held in the past, as a way to build trust between the local law enforcement and community youth. Unfortunately this program is no longer offered and committee members discussed ways to incorporate something similar. Sgt. Santana discussed the importance of being proactive with programming instead of reactive, that community conversations should be constant, not just as a reaction to a tragedy or other negative community experience.

Wrap up – Adam suggested that for the next meeting we have a strategic planning meeting to continue finding ways to operationalize the ideas that have been discussed. Jenny updated the committee about the delay in the library opening, that a conservative estimate for reopening is late March/early April. Adam suggested moving forward with walking tour without larger focus on the library since the timeline has been stretched out so far. Discussion will continue at the January meeting. Adam suggested increased committee conversation in between meetings, utilizing emails and texts to move some actions forward in between monthly meetings.

Befriend-A-Neighbor – Adam and Christine discuss rebranding the program as “Befriend-A-Neighbor” to improve optics. Committee members agreed.

Approval of Minutes – deferred until next month. **Next HRAC meeting** is February 1st, 2024. Meeting adjourned 6:53pm.