

Borough of Doylestown Human Relations Commission

Wednesday, May 25, 2022 – 7pm

Attendance: Borough Manager John Davis, Freda Savana, Nancy Reilly, Fred Stanczak, Stephen Albert, Doreen Stratton, John Fraser, Maxine Katz, and Student Member William Shandlay. Also in attendance were Mayor Noni West, Borough Council President Jack O'Brien, and Vice President Wendy Margolis.

The **Minutes** of the March 2022 meeting were approved as submitted.

Central Bucks School District Discussion. Fred explained the interest of the Human Relations Commission is to reach out to the community and offer its assistance through mediation and outreach. The current issues at Lenape Middle School have been brought to the Commission's attention. In response to the Mayor's statement as well as the Superintendent's public statement, this time is being offered for an open discussion. There has not been a formal complaint filed with the HRC, rather, this is rather an opportunity to discuss the recent events in the school district.

Public Comment:

Jen Herring, mother of a Lenape student, spoke on the struggles her daughter, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, has faced recently. She is grateful for the supportive staff at Lenape, although the threats, bullying and tormenting this year has increased. Her daughter participated in the recent protest in support of a teacher and Ms. Herring felt those who did were discriminated against for doing so. Her hope is the Commission can help. Fred suggested a formal complaint be filed for the HRC to address the issue.

Alison Zimmer is a mother of four students in the district. She discussed her concern, after a member of the community attended the recent protest, that a stranger could come to the school and "lure students out of school with food" she provided and this not be addressed. Fred referred to the Superintendent's detailed statement, and he is aware there are many outlooks on the situation. John advised there is a police report still being finalized regarding the issue.

Vona Dearmond, a resident of Plumstead Township, discussed a recent unpleasant interaction with Phil Ehlinger via social media regarding CB Cares.

Nancy Reilly spoke, as a Human Relations Commission member, and noted the Commission has been trying to work with the Central Bucks School District since its inception and is hopeful now that more community members are aware of the group, their relationship can expand. An audience member asked what clearances are held by the Commission; John Davis explained it is a community resource and not engaging directly with children and are therefore not required, although some members do hold clearances due to their professions. The formal role of the Commission is to review and respond to complaints and it is an entirely voluntary arbitration process. Fred explained the requirements of clearances, and explained the Commission addresses complaints from all people, as requested, under the Borough ordinance.

Ms. Dearmond asked if the commission works with all school board members and explained she felt this group is interfering with school district business and elected officials should be addressing the concerns of students. Jen Herring noted she has attempted to utilize the school's guidance office resources recently, and the school is very short-staffed and could not help. She needs more support for her daughter, and appreciates the HRC's input and assistance.

Donna Shannon, a community resident, spoke on her child needing assistance outside of the school as well and is happy to see people coming together to have these discussions.

Doreen Stratton spoke on her attendance of recent school board meetings. She provided an HRC flyer to each school board member as an additional resource available.

Stephen Albert discussed his 32 years as a teacher/administrator within the Central Bucks School District. He continues to attend school board meetings to keep abreast of the issues. The District is tasked with taking care of their students and are responsible for their safety; he makes his feelings known at all of the meetings he attends.

Fall Anti-Bullying Presentation. This will be discussed at the next meeting, as an education program open to the public and including other community groups.

Window Cling Program. There were just two candidates providing their ideas for the new logo. John explained the initiative to spread more knowledge of the HRC to the community, with the window clings to be displayed in businesses and homes in support of the mission. In response to questions, John read the mission statement of the HRC. All of this information as well as the ordinance is on the Borough website, as well as in the Borough Hall lobby. John invited all those in attendance to learn more about the Commission's goals to promote values as expressed in the ordinance and address formal complaints as they arise.

The commission voted on the hand logo provided, but would like to tone down the bright colors a bit.

New/Old Business. The application for a table at the Pride Block Party was sent to Kris Boger.

Meeting adjourned: 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Kramer

Minutes Secretary