

Borough of Doylestown Human Relations Commission

Wednesday, August 25, 2021 – 7pm

Attendance: Borough Manager John Davis, Doylestown Borough Mayor Ron Strouse, Steve Albert, Doreen Stratton, Frederick Stanczak, Maxine Katz, Freda Savana, Linda Quinn, Nancy Reilly, Sharyn Braun, John Fraser, and Ellen Winters.

The **Minutes** from the July 28, 2021 meeting were approved.

Leslie Richards and Jenny Isaacs, of Immigrations Rights Action, met with the Commission with a presentation to discuss the history and goals of their organization, as well as the complexities of immigration and the current House Bill #279-2021 regarding immigration reform. The group has assisted hundreds of immigrants throughout Bucks County with legal proceedings and access to community programs through outreach and crowdfunding since 2017. Donations from the community have reached \$65,000. The group holds office hours three days a week now, as they are very busy with their work, and hold monthly meetings in Doylestown. They are receiving 65-70 phone calls each month from individuals requesting assistance.

Mayor Strouse had questions on protocols and ICE hearings; Leslie and Jenny reviewed the standard process, which includes 1.3 million cases in need of hearings; they are very behind due to court closures during COVID. The immigration system is in dire need of an overhaul, although Leslie explained the legal immigration process is arduous and challenging to be successful in this punitive system.

Leslie and Jenny were very grateful for the opportunity to talk about what they do with the hope for more involvement and advocacy. Maxine also reviewed what this Commission's goal is, and asked them to refer those who haven't been treated fairly in the community to the Commission for help.

Mayor Strouse explained the COVID vaccine clinics being held by Doylestown Health ask for basic demographic information. He asked Leslie and Jenny to relay the fact that that information does not get shared anywhere, and immigration status is not a factor or a question. The goal is simply to ensure more people are vaccinated.

New/Old Business: John noted that Linda Quinn has shared that the YWCA is willing to come talk with the Commission at an upcoming meeting.

The November meeting will be rescheduled as to not interfere with the Thanksgiving holiday. John will share a few dates with the group and come up with a rescheduled date.

John also reviewed an ongoing issue in Newtown Township regarding a halfway house for sex trafficking victims and the legal ramifications currently being discussed due to some neighbors finding out about this private enterprise.

Meeting adjourned: 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Kramer
Minutes Secretary