

**CITY OF NORWALK
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 20, 2020
6:30PM**

ATTENDANCE: Carol Frank, Chair; Jo Bennet, Daisy Franklin, Carol Gavrielidis; Peter Halladay, Yvonne Rodriguez

STAFF: Anna Keegan, Acting Director

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Frank called the meeting to order at 6:40p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 19, 2019

**Page 1, paragraph 4, change sentence to read that Ms. Rodriguez joined at 6:41

** **MS. FRANKLIN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**
** **MR. HALLADAY SECONDED**
** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Frank gave the details of the upcoming Fair Housing Rights for People with Mental Health Conditions training on April 1st. She said that there would be two sessions, the first for staff from 10-12noon, then for clients from 12-2.

She said that she hoped everyone would come, and that the Mayor would make a proclamation that April was Fair Housing Month. Ms. Keegan said that she would distribute the official email when she got it.

Ms. Frank said that they were working on the Fair Housing budget. She said that they wanted to do another 'secret shopper' test on discrimination in housing. She said that in the past they'd sent 10 people out and that the difference was amazing. She said that people of color were made to wait, shown one apartment on a low floor, not given information and never called back. She said that white people had full tours of buildings, got applications and many follow up phone calls. She said that they then had a session for the discriminators, some of whom took the classes. She said they'd

City of Norwalk

Human Relations Commission Meeting

February 20, 2020

Page 1

try it again if there was funding.

She also said the rest was salary, trying to get it to a commiserate rate as others at the same level. She said they were also trying to get money for a trainee from Norwalk Community College to help Margaret. She said there hadn't been movement, and the Mayor's reorganization was unclear.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Keegan's written report dated February 20, 2020 follows:

Good evening and thank you all for coming out this evening for our meeting.

Statistics

Departmental statistics are attached to this report. From September to January, of the Department's 192 new intakes, 13 were related to the Human Relations Commission. Of the Department's 476 follow-up contacts, 115 were related to the Human Relations Commission.

Commission Members and Departmental Staff

We currently have no vacancies on the Commission.

ADA Update

We have been working with the ADA Committee and the Department of Public Works on a project to create an accessible route between the bus stop, City Hall and the Health Department. We are currently working on the RFP and are hoping to begin work on that project this spring.

Departmental Priorities

In addition to keeping up with the current investigations and routine intakes and responses on behalf of the Fair Rent and Human Relations Commissions, our office is also working on the following projects on behalf of the Human Relations Commission: (1) anti-homelessness initiatives of Opening Doors of Fairfield County; (2) administering projects under the ADA Compliance and Transition Plan; (3) monitoring progress towards the goals set out in the City's Language Access Plan; and (4) International Human Rights Day programs.

Ms. Frank asked about the rainbow crosswalk, Ms. Keegan said that it had passed the Common Council, but she wasn't sure when it was being installed.

She also said that the plastic straws ordinance had passed with appropriate amendments. She said that restaurants were required to have plastic straws upon request, which would go into effect on Earth Day. She said that it was important for people with disabilities to have access to plastic straws.

CASE UPDATES

There was no action on this item.

PUBLIC SESSION

There was no action on this item.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Report from Fair Housing Advisory Commission Representative

Ms. Franklin said that on April 30, the 41st Annual Fair Housing Conference would take place in Wallingford. She said that Michael Allen would be the keynote speaker, and that they'd get legislative updates.

Ms. Frank said that it was a fabulous conference and encouraged anyone who could attend to do so.

Ms. Keegan said she'd recently joined the Board of the Fair Housing Association of Connecticut and would help plan the event.

B. IHR Day Committee Update

Ms. Keegan said that they had had a great event for International Human Rights Day. She said that they were schedule a meeting with Ms. Franklin to discuss what school to hold the next one.

C. ADA Committee Update

This item was covered in the Director's Report

NEW BUSINESS

A. Annual Dinner

Ms. Keegan suggested having the annual dinner on the night scheduled for the meeting, March 19.

The commission agreed to hold it at Station House at 6:30pm, and to have the same menu as last year.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. RODRIGUEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MR. HALLADAY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
L. Grassilli
Telesco Secretarial Service

DRAFT