

**Lower Gwynedd Township
Human Relations Commission
Thursday, November 2, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Commission Members Present:

Christine Lamar – via zoom
Jimmy Chong
Meredith Roark
Stella Lee
Andrew Abramson

Commission Members Absent:

None

Supervisors Present:

No Supervisor's Present

Staff:

Michelle Farzetta – absent (taking minutes via recording)

Call to Order – Meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

Approval of the minutes from September 7, 2023 – Mr. Chong made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Abramson. Motion passed 4-0.

Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2024

The commission reviewed the meeting dates for 2024. They are going to meet the first Thursday of every other month, starting in January. In July they will meet on the second Thursday due to the holiday.

New Business

- **How should the HRC respond to current events i.e., Israel, any local events**
After some discussion the commission agreed that the township has taken a stance, per the statement by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the flag raising event. As a commission they should not be taking a stance, as their mission is to protect the rights of Lower Gwynedd Township residents. The HRC needs to handle local issues to maintain their mission.
- **Photo to be taken for website and content for website**
Everyone agreed to take a photo at the first meeting in January 2024 for the website. There was then a discussion regarding the website and how to go about getting content put onto the Township website. Ms. Lamar confirmed that information will need to be drafted and then sent to Michelle for posting. Everyone agreed to include the mission

statement, instructions on how to file a complaint, as well as the complaint form. There was also conversation regarding clarifying the commissions jurisdiction on the website.

Township updates from Board of Supervisors Liaison- Janine Martin

Ms. Martin was not able to make it to the meeting. However, Ms. Lamar spoke with Ms. Martin and mentioned that they should discuss the website and the content that should be included. The commission set a time frame to have all information to Michelle by January of 2024.

New Information

- Mr. Abramson asked if there was anything new that should be discussed. Members questioned whether they should still invite a representative from the Wissahickon School District to speak regarding the equity and inclusion lessons in the district. Although the Commission has no jurisdiction in the school district, they do feel it would be a great resource for the HRC to have, should anyone come to them looking for assistance. They would then have the necessary information to point them in the correct direction. It was agreed that Ms. Lamar will reach out to the Director of Equity and Cultural Responses and ask if she would like to come in and speak.
- Ms. Lamar mentioned that she spoke with Michelle regarding getting a township email that they can use to communicate back and forth with potential speakers or other local HRC's for events. She is waiting for follow-up from Michelle.
- Resident Paul Erfle, 1251 Turnbury Lane, attended to speak regarding the lack of provisions for citizen input on the agendas. He was assured by the commission that moving forward there would be a "Public Comment" section included on all agendas. Mr. Abramson clarified that all meetings have been public, advertised on the website and all information regarding the brochures, complaint forms and their mission have been discussed at these public meetings. Mr. Erfle stated that the HRC's primary methodology is mediation. What would happen if no one responded? Mr. Abramson stated that we stem from the Pennsylvania Human Relations and that we do not exceed the state's authority. There have been no complaints so far this year, but we have been working on the brochure and complaint form. Ms. Lamar mentioned that they need to be clear about the mission statement moving forward and what our role is. Our role ends with the mediation process. If the issue is not resolved it would then go to the Pennsylvania HRC. The BOS is responsible for finding mediators. Mr. Abramson stated that the ordinance states that the chair of the HRC can select the mediator. Mr. Erfle had additional questions and comments but stated that he would email them to the commission.

Adjournment

A motion was made at 7:36 pm to adjourn. Motion was approved 5-0.