



CITY OF FITCHBURG

PUBLIC MEETING

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 7/14/20 _____

MEETING TIME: 5:30PM _____

MEETING PLACE: VIRTUAL -ZOOM MEETING _____

Meeting Minutes

AGENDA

- Meeting call to order at 5:35pm by Adrian Ford.
{Barbara Nealon, Chair experienced technical difficulties-no volume for her leadership-she asked Adrian to lead the meeting in her stead via phone call}
- Welcoming and Introductions
Members in attendance: Barbara Nealon, Jamie D'arcangelo, Cheryl Stewart, David Roth, Cheryl Maguy Stewart, Maritza Knight, Hafsa Asfa, and Maryam Ashraf
Guests in Attendance: Ralph Baker PhD
- Review of previous meeting minutes June 9, 2020. Meeting minutes accepted as written.
- Public Comment Period- *Opportunity for the public to speak during a Commission Meeting*
Chairperson or designee will ask if anyone in the audience wishes to speak on any matter appearing on the agenda. If you wish to address the commission, raise your hand, when recognized, you must state your name and address and the reason for your speaking-none noted.
- New Business
Presentation -Environmental Justice in Fitchburg-{Communities of Color are disproportionately at risk from the impacts of climate change, such as flooding and urban heat island effects} Ralph S. Baker, PhD. Dr. Baker is a retired environmental scientist and active volunteer member of the Nation of River Watershed Commission.

Slide presentation provided and including with minutes as a separate attachment.

Noted:

- Due to the lack of proper health care, housing, water access, economic opportunity, and quality of life overall, POC are more vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters in comparison to their white counterparts
- We were advised to reach out to organizations that represent black and brown people to inquire them about their needs in regard to environmental injustice
- Suggestions such as ensuring homeless shelters are located in adequate areas and natural trails are made accessible to people of color were made to improve Environmental Justice and any other suggestions are welcome.
- Action in regard to the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program must continue to be improved to ensure safety in the event of a natural disaster or other crises.
- Awareness relating to the effects climate change has on the lives of everyday people must be raised so that people can take a more active role in improving safety measures

Commissioners thanked Dr. Baker for the presentation and noted they look forward to working with him in the future.

Old Business:

- HRC has yet to receive a copy of the city's AA Performance Improvement Plan -discussed in previous meetings.

Last month the City Council passed the following assignment proposal-

Councilors Elizabeth Walsh and Michael Kushmerek to craft a strategic plan to address the racial equity and economic empowerment disparities through the lens of the city practices and policies including, but not limited to: hiring, interning, appointing, and investment in community and economic development. (Human Rights Commission, Economic Development, Legislative Affairs)

President and Vice President of the City Council have asked the Human Rights Commission to assist with a draft proposal. Adrian has started to gather a team to draft a plan and has included the Fitchburg Police Chief as his department has been noted in the past as "best practice" as it relates to diversity and inclusion within his department. More information to come.

- Three Pyramids will be commencing a Leadership Training program starting on July 18th, 2020 for 5 weeks from 9:30am to noon every Saturday.
 - Each participant will receive a stipend of \$500 and a certificate for attending and participating
 - Volunteers from the HRC are requested to speak with the kids in the leadership program. Jamie, Hafsa and Barbara agreed to participate.
- Additional follow up information in regard to the Three Pyramids newsletter was provided. Adrian asked for Commissioners participation in writing articles for the newsletter. If a member wants to submit an piece they have been asked to write a 200 word article with their photo and a caption with their contact information
- Adjournment: 6:44pm

Meeting minutes submitted by,

Maryam Ashraf & Barbara Nealon