

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Jane Fried called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Allopenna, Famularo, Fried, Vaughan Staff: Chatey

Excused: Mitoma

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 19, 2022 Minutes were approved by consensus.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Survey Results to Action Areas

-Affordable Housing

Chatey informed the commission that there is a new committee in Mansfield addressing affordable housing. Fried suggested that there be a meeting with this new committee about what role the HRC can have.

Vaughan volunteered to contact Sam Bruder about meeting with the commission.

B. Book Club Update

Fried contacted the director of the library about hosting a two-session book club on *Waking Up White*. The plan is to invite author Debby Irving to speak as part of the discussion, targeted for October.

C. Suggestion Box

Chatey agreed to contact the Town Manager about funding to invest in suggestion boxes to put around town.

She also mentioned HRC could use these suggestion boxes to deliver a campaign where the boxes can include a question/fact about human rights in the town to boost interest. There was discussion of putting them in the Mansfield Community Center, Mansfield Library, Town Hall, and Mansfield Senior Center. The boxes can also be moved around over time.

D. Discussion about Future Outreach Opportunities

-Juneteenth

Mansfield Middle School grade 8 students have been working on The Witness Stone Project. Chatey mentioned that MMS is planning an opportunity to place the stone in May. This could be an opportunity for HRC to support their efforts.

HRC has been asked by the Town to organize plans to mark Juneteenth in Mansfield. The consensus was that June 18th is the best day for a town-hosted Juneteenth celebration. It is still up in the air whether this needs to be an event or something else to engage community participation, writing contest, poetry slam, story sharing, etc.

There was discussion of contacting clubs at UCONN as well. Fried agreed to contact teachers at the middle school about the Witness Stone Project.

-Pride Month/Festival

Allopenna agreed to talk to Katie Bell about the plans for including the whole commission in the planned Pride Festival in Downtown Storrs on June 10. The festival will end with a movie on the square. The event is being organized by Mansfield Youth Services, and will include activities hosted by the EO Smith Gender & Sexuality Alliance as well as students at Mansfield Middle School.

The event will have activities for youth, and adults can volunteer to help facilitate activities that day.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Welcoming America initiative

The Welcoming America initiative is providing community coaching about how to become more welcoming to newcomers and immigrants. Five staff and volunteers are currently starting on organizing the project. Mansfield will create a plan to identify areas and actions steps to become more welcoming.

Welcoming America is looking for participation in a national effort with a tie-in event in September. In Mansfield, this can be intertwined with the Celebrate Mansfield event September 24, 2022.

Additionally, WAIM, Quiet Corner Refugee Resettlement, The Neighbor Fund, Dodd Center for Human Rights and Integrated Refuge and Immigrant Services are hosting a multicultural storytelling and music event on June 12 at Storrs Congregational Church at 2 PM. The event will include a photo essay about immigrant stories called "Building Bridges." This exhibit might be available for display at Town facilities, too.

The group mentioned that these events would be good opportunities to show HRC support for these initiatives.

6. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.