

City of Peekskill Human Relations Commission

August 20, 2019

7:00 pm

Paul Schwerman Conference Room, City Hall

Minutes of Meeting

Members present: Susie Erdey, Mai Miksic, Myriam Pauta (on telephone), Renee Smith, Mishiba Taylor.

Also present: Mayor André Rainey, Council Member Colin Smith.

Mai Miksic referred to Mayor Rainey's August 7 correspondence to the HRC members in which he acknowledged the departure of the former HRC chair, Fred Galloway, and HRC member Milagros Tompkins at the end of their appointed terms, and his recommendation that Mai Miksic and Susie Erdey be appointed Chair and Co-Chair, respectively. Mai stated that she and Susie had agreed to accept Mayor Rainey's invitation.

Renee Smith announced that she is resigning from the HRC, effective as of tonight's meeting. She encouraged the HRC to continue with the taping and airing of the videos featuring the different cultures and ethnicities in the Peekskill community.

Mayor Rainey noted that with Renee's resignation and Fred's and Milagros's decisions not to seek reappointment, there are now three positions on the HRC to be filled. He noted that one person who had applied to be a member of the HRC when the HRC was in the process of being reconstituted in 2017, but had not been selected at that time, has expressed continuing interest in serving. He suggested that he would make an announcement at the next Common Council meeting (September 9) inviting interested persons to apply.

Given the changes to the HRC membership, the membership list and the PowerPoint file for the HRC will need to be updated on the City's website; Mayor Rainey's assistant, Lizette Erickson, works with the City's new PR firm to make updates to the website. Mai will e-mail former chair Fred Galloway and ask him for a copy of the PowerPoint file so that it can be updated, and a new version will be given to Lizette for uploading.

Mai noted that several of the projects that the HRC proposes to undertake over the next months are complex enough and will involve enough work that subcommittees may be needed: Prospective HRC Projects

- a. Saturday Academy Outreach: September 28 is first session; suggest having a table with copies of Katharine Bloeser's civil rights presentation (which is also now posted on the City's website), updated HRC membership PowerPoint
- b. Gold Star City program: Susie Erdey, Mishiba Taylor, and Mayor Rainey will begin to work on this
- c. Peekskill Complete Count Committee: September 24, 7:00pm meeting at the Central Fire House, presented by Westchester County; topic is why the 2020 Census is a civil

rights issue; the most vulnerable are not seen, not counted, and that means insufficient funding for the City's important programs.

- d. Video recognitions for holidays, celebrations of ethnicities: With Renee Smith's resignation from the HRC, there is a pressing need someone to step into the producer role. Renee noted that Mike Miner had been contributing his camera and editing work pro bono, but he could not continue to provide those services without compensation. Mayor Rainey suggested that the HRC communicate its video production needs to him, and he would see about Mike Miner's availability to assist. Mai Miksic will follow up with Mayor Rainey in early September. Mishiba Taylor is willing to be an on-camera interviewer for the videos. Latinx Heritage Month is October; is this too soon to pull together a new video project? HRC member Myriam Pauta was also suggested as a subcommittee member.
- e. Peekskill Diversity Day: A project of this scope will definitely need subcommittee(s). Mayor Rainey suggested that the HRC could work with the City on logistics, make it a City-sponsored event. This project will need input from people who know how to put together an event budget. Suggestion was made to ask the BID if they would BID be interested in partnering with HRC and with City on this?

Next meeting: Tuesday, September 17, 2019, at 7:00pm in the Paul Schwerman Conference Room at City Hall. Mayor Rainey noted that if any HRC meetings need to be cancelled, we need to inform Lizette Erickson or City Manager Richard Leins.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susie Erdey
Co-chair, Human Relations Commission