

**City of Lambertville
Human Rights Council
June 14, 2021 7:30
In-Person - Pittore Justice Center
MINUTES**

MISSION: To promote and protect human rights at the local level. Together city representatives and resident members ensure that Lambertville remains a place of acceptance and love.

ROLL CALL

LHRC members present:

Roni Todd-Marino – Chairperson/Board of Education rep

Lt. Bob Brown – City Police Dept rep

Bambi Kuhl – City Public Assistance rep

Scott Elliott – Member

Ricardo Zapata – City Library rep

LHRC members absent

Julia Taylor – City Council rep

David Gardiner – Member

ORDINANCE UPDATE - Council Chair Todd-Marino reported that the ordinance update allowing the appointment of non-residents was approved by City Council. It was discussed that the student member previously identified is no longer interested because she is graduating. Recruitment efforts for a new student member to be prioritized.

MEMBER SWEARING IN - Bruce Harris was sworn in as member. Council Chair Todd-Marino nominated Councilmember Harris for the position of Secretary, which was seconded by Councilperson Kuhl. The council unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 2021 approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Judy Gleason of North Union Street requested that the council discuss an issue regarding the Gender Neutral bathrooms. The council agreed to move this topic to the beginning of the meeting. Ms. Gleason reported that another resident noticed that when people use the Gender Neutral bathrooms they often lock the exterior door, and inadvertently reduce the number of available toilets. Discussion ensued. It was decided that because many community members do not understand the significance of a gender-neutral bathroom in promoting safety and wellbeing for the LGBTQ+ community, there is an opportunity for education. The council unanimously voted to recommend a plaque in the bathrooms explaining why we have gender neutral bathrooms, and reminding people that it is their choice to lock, or not lock the exterior door. Council Chair Todd-Marino to contact the Mayor for approval of the plaque and its verbiage.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Formal communication mechanism with trusted groups – RZ, BK
Ricardo Zapata indicated that he has been working with the school district and the City CAT team to survey the Latinx population on various topics. Focus Groups have had greater success than surveys. Councilperson Kuhl stated that she will reach out to religious institutions and other trusted groups before the next meeting.
- Outreach event with Fisherman's Mark – RZ, DG, RB
The subgroup is considering dates for an event. Council Chair Todd-Marino suggested an event after the upcoming Mayoral election to allow the Latinx population to meet the new Mayor.
- Ordinance and policy review - BH, BK, SE (RTM) - Councilperson Harris agreed to reach out to Cindy Ege to determine the preferred process for recommending changes to the ordinances. Councilperson Elliott agreed to join this subcommittee. It was clarified that Council Chair Todd-Marino will only focus on the policies and ordinances that are specific to the Municipal Equality Index.
- Research alternate Crisis Response Team – RTM, BH. It was noted that many cities around the country have implemented new programs. The subcommittee to review data regarding these pilot programs as it becomes available.
- Facebook/Marketing – DG, RTM, SE Marketing of the LHRC mission and programs was raised in the discussion with students at South. Now that there is an approved logo, the subcommittee will move forward with the Facebook page to promote our events as well as resources in the region.

CITY WIDE ANTI-RACISM INITIATIVE

Council Chair Todd-Marino, Lt. Brown and Councilperson Harris met with the students of SHRHS's Social Justice Class to solicit feedback on the Together Fighting Racism campaign. The student group asked that LHRC and LPD first consider the need to build trust with the community by educating the public on the council's and police department's past and current actions to support the rights of BIPOC, the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized populations. Lt. Brown shared that the police and other city departments will participate in an Anti-Bias training. Councilperson Harris reported that the Greater Lambertville Chamber of Commerce has agreed to join the initiative. Discussion ensued.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ricardo Zapata reported that Fisherman's Mark and the City worked together on two COVID Vaccine events. Close to 200 residents were vaccinated including members of the Latinx populations, seniors and homebound individuals.
- Lt. Brown reported that the PD is promoting and assisting residents with Register Ready, a registry used in emergency situations to ensure assistance to any individuals with special needs.

ADJOURNMENT

- Council Chair Todd-Marino motioned to adjourn, Lt. Brown seconded. Motion was carried.