

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, March 1, 2021 at 5:00 PM

ZOOM Invite, Online Meeting

- Due to the COVID State of Emergency, this meeting will be conducted using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The public may view the meeting online at www.zoom.com and click on “Join A Meeting” enter Meeting ID 838 4094 3157
- To listen to the meeting, please dial (646) 876-9923 and when prompted enter Meeting ID 838 4094 3157
- If you encounter issues accessing this meeting, please call (603) 757-1835 during the meeting

Members:

William Hay, Chair
Dr. Dottie Morris
Janis Manwaring
Dr. Mohammed Saleh
Nancy Salwen
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Dr. Shaun Filiault
Ritu Budakoti

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Guests:

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of February 1, 2021 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Keene State College Alumni Outreach
5. Pride Month
6. Juneteenth
7. Library ALA Grant
8. New, Other Business
9. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, April 5, 2021 at 5:00 PM

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

8 **Monday, February 1, 2021**

5:00 PM

Remotely via Zoom

Members Present:

William Hay, Chair
Ritu Budakoti
Jan Manwaring, Councilor
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Marti Fiske
Dr. Mohammed Saleh, Vice Chair
Dr. Dottie Morris
Nancy Salwen
Dr. Shaun Filiault (arrived at 5:29 PM)

Staff Present:

Andrew Bohannon, Parks, Recreation, and
Facilities Director

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12 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**
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14 Chair Hay read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to
15 Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions
16 of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared
17 COVID-19 State of Emergency. He called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM.
18

19 **2) Approval of January 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes**
20

21 Councilor Manwaring made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 3, 2021. Dr.
22 Morris seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.
23

24 **3) Finance Report**
25

26 Mr. Bohannon reported that there is a change from previous months – in the very near future this
27 will become a lot different, given all the activity that is going on, which is fantastic.
28

29 Ms. Budakoti made a motion to approve the finance report. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos seconded
30 the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.
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4) Keene State College Alumni Outreach

Dr. Morris stated that she does not have an update; she needs to reach out again. She will check her email again but does not think she has received a response yet. She continued that she knows the committee wanted to do something this month. She asked Mr. Bohannon what she should do if she does get a response back to share with the group, since including too many people in an email thread makes it a public meeting. Mr. Bohannon replied that she can communicate directly with him. He continued that if they have a date set up in time, they can do it, and he will send the information back out to the committee. It could be a “pop-up,” as he has been calling it with other groups.

5) MLK Breakfast

Mr. Bohannon stated that they did well with this and had 63 attendees. He continued that it got picked up by various media. If anyone has not seen it, it is on the HRC’s website and he encourages people to watch it. It was a great session by Dr. Waller. There was a lot of great feedback, and a lot of sharing of the video. Chair Hay stated that he received a lot of good feedback about it as well. He continued that he was really impressed by Dr. Waller’s presentation.

6) Pride Month

Mr. Bohannon stated that he has been in communication with the Monadnock International Film Festival (MONIFF) people and MONIFF has sent some great information related to what the HRC might be able to do for some type of film festival in collaboration with them. The Executive Director is Dee Fitzgerald and she sent an outline of Pride Week Festival that breaks down the tasks for February, March, April, and May. They talked about providing three films. Ms. Fitzgerald found three films for the HRC to view that she thought would be good at generating audience. Mr. Bohannon listed and described the three movies, Funny Boy, Born to Be, and Deep in Vogue. The total projected cost would be about \$2,100. That includes advertising through the Keene Sentinel, printing, and the film rentals licensing. The price could be reduced depending on the advertising. He continued that he had a conversation with an interested potential sponsor, which could reduce the cost as well. He does not think this is a heavy lift for the committee. They can market it through social media and Keene State College (KSC) channels. The proposed dates are May 6, 7, and 8, with one film a day. Dr. Filiault had ideas about some sort of “dinner and a movie” special, but he himself has not gotten that far yet – he is only at the basics, getting everything in line to do the news release and those sorts of things to make sure they have a successful event. But he wanted to pass that information along. He would be happy to pass information back to the committee and they can go from there.

73 Mr. Bohannon stated that he thinks they need to make a decision this month, about whether this
74 is the direction they want to go. He could report back at the March meeting, regarding the
75 finances and what sponsorships they have.

76
77 Committee members gave feedback and asked questions. One question was whether the viewers
78 would be charged to view the movies. Mr. Bohannon replied no, it would all be free. He
79 continued that he thinks what Dr. Filiault was thinking was that if you sign up for something you
80 might connect it with somebody else, like the dinner aspect of it. But for the HRC, they are
81 looking to make sure the movies are free to the public. Another question was whether there
82 would be panel discussions after the movies. Mr. Bohannon replied that that was part of the
83 discussion for sure and he is not positive about what Dr. Filiault was thinking about this or who
84 would be leading the panel discussion, but there should be an opportunity for questions and
85 answers. It might be something they could record ahead of time and put out there that night. He
86 would encourage Dr. Filiault to follow up on this. Dr. Morris stated that she will give him a
87 name to consider – John Scagliotti, a documentary film-maker from Vermont. She gave more
88 information about him and his work. She continued that Hunter Kirschner would also be
89 interested. Mr. Bohannon replied that that is why they wanted Pride to be in May – so people
90 from the college could participate.

91
92 Ms. Salwen spoke about how there are so many films available for people to watch these days,
93 so having this in conjunction with a powerful speaker makes it a real event and more worthwhile
94 in her mind. She asked what else the HRC has going on that they need to think about allocating
95 money for. What about for Juneteenth or the Keene International Festival (KIF)? The HRC
96 does not have much incoming money at this point. Mr. Bohannon replied that is a good point,
97 and before they decide on allocating money for this they should hear from Councilor Manwaring
98 and Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos about their plans for Juneteenth. The HRC no longer receives
99 funding from St. James thrift shop, because it does not exist anymore.

100
101 Dr. Filiault arrived at the meeting.

102
103 Mr. Bohannon stated that the HRC gets \$500 every year; he is in the process of the budget right
104 now and can raise that to \$1,000. They can do this in two ways – they could say the HRC will
105 do three major events per year (Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast, Pride, and Juneteenth) and
106 allocate \$500 per event, which he does not think is a super heavy lift from the City. That would
107 be asking for an additional \$1,000. He could ask. Whether they get that or not, there is still
108 \$4,500 that they have not touched in quite a while. Gaining event sponsors would reduce the
109 costs, and he knows there are people willing to sponsor these types of events. The KIF has its
110 own account.

111
112 Mr. Bohannon asked Dr. Filiault for his thoughts on having some type of dialogue before or after
113 the films. Dr. Filiault stated that the goal was to pick a few films that had some success at
114 festivals and also are talked about as being good representation of LGBTQ issues, and then have
115 a speaker, panel, or discussion follow. He has not seen the films on the list they were given. The

116 budget they were given is the outside ballpark, and they were told some films may be available
117 for free or reduced cost, particularly since it will be for a non-profit. COVID-19 will still be an
118 issue in May, so it will be good to have something that can be streamed, such as a movie and a
119 discussion. A block party would not be realistic for May. Thus, this provides an opportunity to
120 do programming that will have the widest outreach while still maintaining social distancing.
121

122 Dr. Morris asked what people think - should they preview the films before saying yes to them, or
123 just trust the process? Chair Hay replied that it would make sense for them to preview the
124 movies – if not all HRC members, then at least a screening committee. Mr. Bohannon stated that
125 he will send the links for each of the three movies and follow up with Ms. Fitzgerald. He
126 continued that she is an international film festival executive director and probably has a really
127 good handle on this. He can reach out to her and see if the films could possibly be streamed.
128

129 Ms. Fiske asked if they would just have one discussion, repeated for all three films. She
130 continued that if they are trying to get a separate discussion for each film, previewing them
131 might help the HRC choose the relevant discussion topics and discussion leader. Chair Hay
132 asked if they can have a discussion after each film. Dr. Filiault stated that he definitely thinks
133 they should screen each film before choosing them, to make sure they have a diversity of themes
134 to be able to discuss and a diversity of themes relevant to the community. He continued that he
135 trusts MONIFF and their judgment for films, but this will be a City-sponsored event, so it is
136 worthwhile to make sure the movies are appropriate and at least PG-13 level, since it will be
137 streamed to the entire community. Ms. Salwen agreed that they should preview the movies.
138

139 Ms. Salwen asked about the idea of having one of the films be one of John Scagliotti's, and
140 asking him to be the speaker. Dr. Morris replied that his films have been shown a couple of
141 times already. She continued that one of his might be too long to be shown in a film festival, and
142 two others are from the 1980s, but he would be a great person to talk about, because he helped
143 develop younger documentary filmmakers. He has a whole crew of people he has worked with,
144 from all over the world, because people come to his camps.
145

146 Ms. Fiske stated that they should consider the length of the films they are choosing, and how
147 long the discussions will be. If the films are long they may lose audience members if they have
148 the discussions after instead of before the films. Mr. Bohannon replied good point. He
149 continued that Deep in Vogue is 62 minutes, Born to Be is an hour and 33 minutes, and Funny
150 Boy is an hour and 49 minutes.
151

152 Dr. Morris stated that for the NH Jewish Film Festival, when you register you get an email with a
153 link that is live for 72 hours. You can watch the film anytime during those 72 hours, and then
154 there is a scheduled, hour-long panel you can join. Maybe they could do something like that?
155 Maybe they could have a 24-hour period for people to watch the film and then have a discussion.
156 Mr. Bohannon replied yes, he thinks this was the thought process – 72-hour access to the three
157 movies and panel discussions. Dr. Filiault replied that the intent was to have the opening film
158 with a discussion and then have both on demand for 72 hours.

159
160 Dr. Filiault stated that it would be great to get films that bring intersectionality, and Deep in
161 Vogue involves Black and Latinx culture. If they are really deliberate with these movies they
162 can hit a wide array of human rights themes.

163
164 Chair Hay asked if the 72-hour period would be May 6-8 or have one each night. Dr. Filiault
165 replied that they would work their way through that. Dr. Saleh stated that he hopes it is 72 hours
166 for each movie, because it is difficult for busy people to have three movie nights in a row. It
167 would be interesting to have a panel discussion on all three movies.

168
169 Dr. Filiault made a motion for the Human Rights Committee to authorize Mr. Bohannon to do all
170 things necessary to obtain access for these films and begin the development for the Keene Pride
171 event, and to authorize up to a \$1,000 budget for the event with the intent that as much money as
172 possible will come from outside sponsors or other organizations; and for the films to be shown at
173 the festival to be selected by a committee comprised of members from the Human Rights
174 Committee. Dr. Morris seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

175
176 **7) Juneteenth**

177
178 Councilor Manwaring stated that she and Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos met. She continued that as
179 she stated in last month's minutes, the plan is food, music, and history. They thought of opening
180 the event with a reading of the announcement that the slaves are freed, from the Governor of
181 Texas, and the Square would have other historical figures throughout the day. They want to
182 work with restaurants about food, and for music, they need the HRC's help. It would be nice to
183 have different kinds of music. The event does need money, which Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos will
184 talk about.

185
186 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is still working up a budget. She thinks it will be about
187 \$2,000. They have not yet examined sponsorships. They will pay musical acts a fee, and there
188 will be some marketing costs to publicize the event. Given the nature of the event and the
189 community we are in, there is a good chance they will get sponsorships.

190
191 Councilor Manwaring stated that they are also thinking about promoting diversity. She
192 continued that they have representatives here from the Keene India Association and they hope,
193 for example, that Gail Somers will join the event, too. That is another part they are working on.

194
195 Ms. Salwen stated that she would be interested in helping brainstorm about music or meet with
196 the subcommittee once or twice. Chair Hay suggested they touch base with the Jamaican
197 restaurant, which has Jamaican musicians.

198
199 In response to a question about how COVID-19 might affect the event, Councilor Manwaring
200 stated that she thinks it is an outside activity, and the date is a Saturday this year, and hopefully it

201 will not rain. She is in contact with Gail Zachariah and will see what her ideas are, too. It would
202 be great if the event could be live, not just virtual.

203

204 In response to questions about the event's location, Councilor Manwaring stated that they want
205 both Central Square and Railroad Square. She asked if Mr. Bohannon reserved both of those
206 spaces. Mr. Bohannon replied yes.

207

208 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that it would not be that difficult to make the event virtual, if
209 needed. It could be on Facebook Live and include musical acts if there were not too many of
210 them. It would not be the same as a live event, of course, but they could have the same
211 components. Perhaps they could get the cooperation of local restaurants to do their menu for the
212 day and people could order takeout.

213

214 Ms. Fiske asked what the \$2,000 budget is expected to cover. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos replied
215 that she was thinking of about five musical acts at about \$300 apiece and approximately \$500 for
216 marketing and printing. Ms. Fiske replied that it sounds like they would have to seek sponsors to
217 pay the historical performers, unless someone local donates it. Discussion continued about the
218 importance of paying musical acts and historical performers.

219

220 Councilor Manwaring stated that she was also thinking of somehow involving the Keene
221 Farmer's Market, since it will be a Saturday and they will be there. She continued that it may get
222 into Gilbo Ave. a little bit. There are a couple other people joining the planning. In order to pull
223 this off they do need a group. Chair Hay stated that he would be glad to portray Frederick
224 Douglas.

225

226 Mr. Bohannon stated that the Keene Young Professionals (KYP) is planning an international
227 food festival in late May or early June, the week before June 19. He thinks that is June 12,
228 which will also be Art Walk. They will be doing some events. This will be a back to back thing.
229 He would caution against having five acts, because that is a lot of logistics. Having worked with
230 Ms. Budakoti on the KIF, he recommends they start small and grow. Five acts would make it a
231 five- or six-hour event, and they might not want it to be that long. He recommends they not go
232 beyond a three-hour event.

233

234 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she was picturing 30-minute sets. Mr. Bohannon replied that
235 there would need to be time to break down and set up as well, which would take at least 20
236 minutes per act.

237

238 Councilor Manwaring stated that the KYP told her they would give two weeks between events
239 and would not go back to back. Why did they change that? Mr. Bohannon replied that he thinks
240 the KYP is trying to think like the HRC is – if they can host an outdoor event in June. He has a
241 meeting coming up with them and will review all of that information with them. Councilor
242 Manwaring stated that it would be great if there could be two weeks between the events.

243

244 Ms. Budakoti stated that there is another festival that will be happening around the same
245 timeframe, planned by the Historical Society. She continued that she will check about that and
246 report back to the committee. If Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos and Councilor Manwaring are looking
247 for any performances from the Keene India Association she would be happy to coordinate that.
248 Ms. Fiske stated that that festival Ms. Budakoti mentioned is scheduled for August.

249
250 Chair Hay stated that they should have a lot of this answered by the next meeting, because time
251 will sneak up on them. Discussion continued. In response to the suggestion that they consider
252 combining events with the KYP, Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos spoke about the importance of keeping
253 Juneteenth as its own event. Chair Hay agreed that it should be distinct.

254
255 Mr. Bohannon stated that they have two very active subcommittees. He continued that he will
256 continue to work with Dr. Filiault on the Pride event. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos and Councilor
257 Manwaring have reached out to him about this event and he is happy to give them whatever
258 guidance they need. Both subcommittees can come back to the HRC Committee in March,
259 which will be a heavy agenda and mainly focused on those two events.

260

261 **8) New or Other Business**

262

263 Chair Hay asked if anyone has new or other business. Mr. Bohannon stated that one of the
264 positives about having Ms. Fiske on this committee is the many events the Library does. He
265 continued that Ms. Zachariah told him about how the Library will be leading facilitated
266 conversations about diversity and race in our community, and people will be trained in this
267 through the Library. She asked if the HRC Committee wanted to be involved with this and he
268 said yes on the committee's behalf. The Library Trustees are excited about this, too.

269

270 Ms. Fiske stated that Ms. Zachariah is creating a committee to work on these events; it is part of
271 an American Library Association (ALA) grant. She continued that the focus will be on race
272 relations. Ms. Zachariah may reach out to HRC members about joining that committee to help
273 organize the whole process. The idea is to have several small-group conversations, probably on
274 Zoom, and the grant requires it be completed by July 31. They could potentially tie something
275 into the Juneteenth event, if Councilor Manwaring and Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos wanted to talk
276 with Ms. Zachariah about that. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will add this to the HRC's March
277 agenda.

278

279 Chair Hay noted that today is the first day of Black History Month, and it is a short month. Dr.
280 Morris stated that she could be here all night talking about why February was chosen for Black
281 History Month. It was requested by Carter Woodson. There is a specific and strategic reason for
282 that. Mr. Bohannon asked if she could briefly explain more. Dr. Morris replied that February is
283 the birth month of Abraham Lincoln and W.E.B. DuBois, and that is why Carter Woodson chose
284 it. Chair Hay stated that the other 11 months should be steeped in Black History also, because
285 there is a lot to learn.

286

287 Councilor Manwaring stated that the Ad Hoc Racial Justice and Community Safety (AHRJCS)
288 Committee is bringing their report to the City Council shortly, and the HRC has been mentioned
289 as possibly being involved in the report and/or the continuation of the work. There are questions
290 of whether the AHRJCS Committee will continue or be folded into the HRC. She continued that
291 Mr. Bohannon will be hearing about it if he has not already. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, he is
292 aware, and the HRC's agenda may expand. The HRC is gaining traction. This committee is
293 really being pushed forward as a resource, as an opportunity and a venue for people to share.
294 Oftentimes people say "I don't know who to go through," and he says, "Try the HRC. At least
295 have a dialogue here, as a start." They are making progress. If they can pull off Pride month,
296 and Juneteenth, and the conversations with students, and the ALA grant, that is progress. They
297 need to just keep taking steps forward, because that is what it takes. Chair Hay agreed. He
298 stated that he is surprised by how many people do not even know the HRC exists. Mr. Bohannon
299 stated that there are communities reaching out to him to learn what the HRC is doing and why
300 and how. It is good to be a model, but they have to be a model of success.

301

302 Mr. Bohannon asked what Zoom format the committee prefers for their meetings. Brief
303 discussion ensued. Committee members replied that they are fine with today's format.

304

305 **9) Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, March 1, 2021, at 5:00 PM**

306

307 There being no further business, Chair Hay adjourned the meeting at 6:10 PM.

308

309 Respectfully submitted by,

310 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

