

**City of Lambertville
Human Rights Council
7:30 PM Monday July 13, 2020
VIA ZOOM
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.

**WELCOME
ROLL CALL**

(9) LHRC members:

Roni Todd-Marino - President
Beth Asaro – City Council rep, Secretary of LHRC
Lt. Bob Brown – Police rep
Emily Carone – Library rep (new member to be named)
~~Effie Castro – Resident~~
~~David Gardiner – Resident~~
Bruce Harris - Resident
Filomena Hengst – Board of Education rep
Bambi Kuhl – Public Assistance rep

LHRC Friends & Guests

~~Zach Berliner~~
~~Mary Jane Legere~~
~~Eric Rounds~~
John Woods
Benjamin West
Cassidy Marino
Allen Wurplel
Matthew Hanson
Patrick Artur

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 10, 2020 – Asaro made the motion, Todd-Marino seconded the motion, all were in favor - approved.

OLD BUSINESS

● **Events Calendar**

- Signature Events
 - Great Big Day/Together We Are Lambertville Picnic -postponed to next
 - Pride Parade – *New Hope Celebrates events for 2020 have been cancelled.*
- Supported Community Events
 - Know Your Rights – none planned at this time

- Senior Social Nights – on hold
 - Potential: Teen Safe Space – will reconsider after pandemic
- **LGBTQ+ Focus**
 - Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index (HRC MEI) – Roni reported that Lambertville received a draft score of 98 but there are additional points for which we may be eligible, so we will appeal and provide additional documentation.
 - GSA Partnership – Beth reported on the virtual Day of Silence and encouraged participation in next year’s event.
- **Student / Youth Community**
 - School District inclusivity initiative – Filomena indicated a BOE subcommittee has continued to work on this in preparation for an August BOE retreat. She reported that the new Superintendent, who started on 7/1/20, is focusing on these efforts. It was agreed that we will invite Superintendent Tony Suozzo to our August meeting.
 - Enrichment Scholarship(s) –on hold due to the pandemic. Roni reported that the preliminary data from the Hunterdon County Needs Assessment showed that families reported cost of afterschool activities as a barrier. Bambi asked for clarification on the source of the funds. In the initial effort for the program, the subcommittee learned that there were funds available for certain programs. A LHRC sponsored effort could connect families to available resources (either through that particular program or through the Prall Trust) through one mechanism and could also solicit donations to the Prall Trust as a resource for any Lambertville resident in crisis. Filomena will reach out to Leslie Darling to see where the subcommittee left off with the effort.
- **Immigrant Community**
 - Translation Services – the new system discussed by Mayor Fahl in our January meeting is on hold. Beth will check on status.
- **Mental Health Community**
 - Stigma Free Municipality – Roni will forward proclamation to City Clerk to get on City Council agenda.
- **Senior Community**
 - Education regarding Senior Tax Freeze – Bambi will reach out to the Tax Collector to see how the program is promoted.
 - Meals on Wheels – Volunteer Shoppers - Roni reported that Meals on Wheels was able to move and provide uninterrupted service to Lambertville seniors. Their numbers expanded during the pandemic as has the Volunteer Shopper program through Hunterdon Helpline.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Review of Potential Bias Incidents**

Lt. Brown shared that there were four incidents since our February meeting. There was a question regarding the LHRC role in the review of these incidents. It was clarified that we are to monitor for patterns and recommend and support projects that address any patterns that emerge. Roni pointed out that the

majority of incidents over the past two years have involved youth, so supporting the school in enriching their programming and offering our expertise is appropriate.

- **Anti-Bias Initiatives**

- School-Based

- Anti-Bias programming – The group discussed options for addressing bias in the school. Filomena indicated that recruitment to expand diversity and teacher trainings are a critical component. There was discussion about supporting the formation of a Black Student Union, as LHRC supported the formation of the GSA. It was reiterated that our role is to support the efforts of the school so we will continue this discussion with the new Superintendent.
 - Black History Month(ly) series – Bruce described his professional background teaching and conducting lectures on Race and Privilege. He asked that the group first establish priorities for the any initiative. Bruce agreed to join the Student subcommittee and he and Filomena will discuss next steps.

- City-Wide

- One City-One Book – Beth reported that the City is looking at implementing an annual program where city residents read and discuss a salient topic.
 - Black-Owned Businesses – Beth and Bruce reported that there have been efforts with the Chamber of Commerce to attract Black-Owned Businesses to Lambertville. Bruce has joined the Chamber and is helping them to formalize some of the data that will help in the effort and to establish a Virtual Chamber. Bambi offered to connect Bruce with the ED of the African-American Chamber of Commerce out of Trenton.
 - Lambertville Police Dept Review of Current Practices (Lt. Brown)
 - Lt Brown detailed Lambertville PD's efforts over the past 20 years to ensure fair policing. These included, but were not limited to, the use of vehicle recording devices, body cameras, internal affairs investigations of all complaints, training and supervision to reduce discriminatory practices and bias. Lt. Brown also described the current certification process for officers and the Attorney General's recent directive to expand required training and police licensing.
 - Community member Benjamin West asked questions regarding the provided arrest statistics and the reported investigated complaints.
 - It was confirmed that review of details about internal affairs complaints was not the role of LHRC.
 - Lt. Brown was thanked for his commitment to transparency. He asked that we continue to look at ways to expand

stakeholder meetings to build community trust. We agreed to continue the topic in future meetings.

- The LHRC continues to encourage the discussion of difficult and challenging ideas, however we will continue to require respectful, productive conversation in the spirit of cooperation with a goal of making the city an even better place to live.

CORRESPONDENCE – None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community members were thanked for their participation in the discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Emily Carone motion, seconded by Filomena, all in favor – approved.