



**Livonia Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: K. Aoun, H. Fakhouri, R. Glover, D. Jordan, R. Zuckerman

GUESTS: Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan, Dave Varga, Josh Sabo,
Kristin Houchins, Jennifer Simmons, Councilmember
Brandon McCullough, Edgar Jackson

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brosnan called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. via Zoom

II. INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING REMARKS

Mayor Brosnan informed the members of the Commission that the Mayor's Office, which is already responsible for Constituent Relations and Communication, will be overseeing the Commission going forward as opposed to the Community Resources Department

Members introduced themselves and gave a brief synopsis of their backgrounds and occupations.

III. UPDATE: PEACEFUL PROTESTS & CITY RESPONSE TO DATE

Mayor Brosnan updated the Commission on the peaceful protest that was held two weeks ago and noted that, while we were initially informed of this protest due to social media reports, the organizers did speak with Chief Caid the day of the event and that helped facilitate a successful event.. The second protest at City Hall on Sunday, June 7, 2020 consisted of nearly 2000 people. Organizers contacted the City in advance, and both the Mayor's Office and LPD worked to help organizers host a safe protest.

The Mayor emphasized it is critically important that the Mayor's Office and the Police Department stay coordinated and aligned to ensure the safe expression of First Amendment rights and provide protest groups with clear, concise, transparent information to assist them in organizing peaceful events. This is being done, with both the Mayor and Chief Caid issuing statements prior to the second protest and providing protest guidelines and an intent to protest form on the City's website so protest organizers can alert public safety personnel that an event is being planned in Livonia.

IV. DISCUSSION: PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND THE ROLE OF LIVONIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Mayor Brosnan outlined the current charge of the Commission and expressed her desire to broaden its scope.

PROPOSED NEW CHARGE OF THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

- To ensure that everyone is treated fairly – regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other identity.
- To shed a brighter light on racial and social injustice which permeates all communities, including Livonia.
- To activate the next generation to shape the strategies that will lead to ending racism and social injustice.

Commissioner Fakhouri noted the importance of including the business community in the work of the Commission to effectively engage them in the change necessary to promote diversity and inclusion.

Commissioner Zuckerman encouraged the Commission to broaden the scope of its charge to make building partnerships with community groups central to its work.. Mayor Brosnan agreed and informed the Commission that the City already has a wonderful relationship with the Livonia School Districts and that fostering that partnership and creating more with other businesses should be a priority. The description of the charge of the Commission will be amended to include this concept.

Commissioner Jordan stated that the Commission needs to formalize the “why” factor when branding ourselves to the community.

Commissioner Aoun added that often times individuals who do not experience discrimination on a regular basis may not understand what it looks like in everyday language and interactions and, for this reason, agreed with Commissioner Jordan and suggested that residents have a method of sharing their stories, giving their experiences a voice.

Mayor Brosnan explained it is important we be pro-active and involved in promoting the values of diversity and inclusion throughout the City, including not

only the Police Department, but all City Departments. This may include uncomfortable conversations, but this dialog is important.

ABOUT THE UNITY PROJECT

Mayor Brosnan provided an example from the Parks and Recreation Department, This summer the Department of Parks and Recreation will be launching an interactive public art project called UNITY as a response to the divisiveness and negative rhetoric in American politics.

UNITY was created to raise consciousness about labels we give ourselves and others and explores how those labels both support and limit building interconnected, interesting communities.

UNITY is a larger-than-life structure that helps us celebrate our uniqueness and strengthens our ties to each other.

The project consists of 32 posts, each with identifiers such as, “I’m a parent; I speak English as a second language; I identify as LGBTQ,” etc. Participants tie colorful yarn to posts that reflect their identities. Their yarn intertwines with others to create a web of interconnectedness. In the end, we see that we are all connected by something, and it's our diversity that builds a strong and vibrant community.

NEXT STEPS

- Mayor Brosnan asked the Commission to give some thought to taking on the role of recommending policies and practices which increase fairness, justice, and mutual respect, including, but not limited to, making recommendations to the Livonia Police Department to ensure fair, safe and effective policing
 - Mayor Brosnan asked the Commission to email her by the end of the week at mayorstaff@ci.livonia.mi.us if they were interested in being Chairperson or Secretary, or if they knew of anyone who had an interest in serving on the Commission.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The Zoom Meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2020, AT 7 P.M. VIA ZOOM