

**Lower Gwynedd Township  
Human Relations Commission  
Thursday, May 4, 2023  
Meeting Minutes**

**Commission Members Present:**

Jimmy Chong- via zoom  
Meredith Roark  
Stella Lee  
Christine Lamar

**Commission Members Absent:**

Andrew Abramson

**Supervisors Present:**

Janine Martin

**Staff:**

Michelle Farzetta – absent (taking minutes via recording)

**Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Approval of the minutes from March 2, 2023** – Ms. Lamar made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 2, 2023 meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

**Dr. Bernadine Ahonkhai from the Coalition for Racial Equity and Social Justice to present her lesson plan for examination by the HRC**

Dr. Bernadine Ahonkhai received grant funding that allows her to go to school districts and provide an eight-week course addressing topics of bullying, cyberspace harassment and social justice. Currently the program is being run in North Penn and Norristown School Districts at the middle school level. Dr. Ahonkhai mentioned at a previous meeting that she approached Wissahickon School District, but was told that the program did not fit into their curriculum. She returned today to share the curriculum with the HRC. The course would be held weekly for roughly 50 minutes. She reviewed the various components included in the program. Members of the HRC questioned whether this program was even presented to the school board for discussion.

**Discussion of the letter to draft to Wissahickon School District Diversity and Inclusion Office: re- Dr. Ahonkhai's Coalition for Racial Equity and Social Justice lesson plan for students**

The Commission would like to draft a letter to the Wissahickon School District inquiring as to why the curriculum and program presented by Dr. Ahonkhai's was not considered. After reviewing the content, the HRC feels the material is neutral in content and should be considered. There were questions regarding who makes decisions regarding the curriculum, is it the school itself or the school board. Is there a process in place when presented with

programs such as this for implementation. It was decided to table this conversation for the next meeting when everyone could attend and a letter could be drafted.

### **New Business**

**a. Tri-state Human Relations Commission Update – Memorandum from Andrew Abramson to be presented to full HRC by Christine Lamar**

Mr. Abramson was not in attendance, but sent a message with Ms. Lamar regarding his attendance in the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Tri-State HRC. There was an issue at the January meeting regarding the position that they should be taking on certain issues. There was also discussion regarding what their purpose was. Interest was expressed regarding information on what other local HRC's are focusing on. Lower Gwynedd Township's HRC feels that each Commission should stay in their lane and not take a stance as a whole on any one topic as a whole.

**b. Pride Flag Raising Ceremony Update – Ms. Lamar stated that there would be a Pride Flag ceremony on June 1, 2023 at 6pm. At this time, they are unsure of what role they will play in the ceremony. They are waiting to hear from Ms. Martin regarding any publicity regarding this event.**

**c. Discussion of the next HRC meeting dates for 2023**

Ms. Lamar asked for input regarding the Commission holding monthly meetings. Is it really necessary? Once the complaint form is complete, what else would they want to accomplish? It could be feasible to hold quarterly meetings. She feels that members should attend online trainings and participate in the Fall Fest. If there are any additional events someone feels they should attend let the group know. The June meeting will be the same day as the Pride Flag ceremony, so that would take the place of the June meeting. There will be no July meeting as it falls on the holiday weekend. August 3<sup>rd</sup> will be the next formal meeting.

**d. Any New Business from HRC Members – There was no new business to discuss**

### **Solicitor's comments to complaint procedures and brochure-Board of Supervisors Liaison – Janine Martin**

The commission reviewed the feedback form Mr. Stein regarding the complaint form created by Mr. Abramson. Nothing in particular stood out regarding his comments. There were a few questions. One, would the township provide a translator for those who might be Spanish speaking? Second, do we have a township email, and if so, who would be the one reviewing the emails? All complaints would be forwarded to Ms. Lamar, but who would be the person doing this. They will make the recommended changes from Mr. Stein and then review it in June when they all meet June 1<sup>st</sup> for the Pride Flag ceremony.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Lamar made a motion at 8:00 pm to adjourn. Motion was approved 4-0.