

MONMOUTH COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Full Commission Meeting

Monday December 5, 2016 3:30 – 5:00PM

Agriculture Building

4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold, NJ 07728

Attendance: Linda Zucaro, Ted Lee, Robert Williams, John Schwebel, Carolyn Schwebel, Sherri West, Chris Gramicchione, Jeff Schwartz, Ron Soponoff, Ricky Pierce, Tom Hugh, Rosa Lee, Robert Honecker, Darryl Hughes, Nina Anderson, Patrick Collum, Fatima Jaffari, Sondra Cannon, Jeff Delaney, John Curley, Rabbi Marc Klein.

The meeting was called to order at 3:34 pm and the salute to the flag followed. The minutes from the October Full Commission meeting as previously distributed were approved (West, Schwartz). There was no treasurer's report.

Nor were there reports offered from Membership, Incident Response and Reporting or Resource Development. Communications reported that the 2017 calendar has been finalized and distributed.

There was no Unfinished Business raised.

There followed introductions all around as many attending were present for the first time in a while.

Chairperson Delaney kicked off the discussion by introducing the following motion -

Whereas the Monmouth County Human Relations Commission was formed by resolution of the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 1990,

And whereas the primary mission of the Commission is to combat the causes of bias and discrimination in Monmouth County,

And whereas numerous laws, commissions, and agencies have been formulated in the past 26 years for the same purpose, absorbing and superseding the mission and purpose of the Commission,

Be it resolved that Monmouth County Human Relations Commission be dissolved effective December 2016

The motion was formally proposed by Darryl Hughes and seconded by Jeff Schwartz.

Linda Zucaro introduced Rabbi Klein who was to facilitate the discussion and read a brief biography.

Ron Soponoff and Ted Lee each offered their views as to why the Commission should continue. Darryl Hughes asked the group to identify what is needed for viability. John Schwebel stressed that member commitment was needed - to include serving as officers, program leadership and regular attendance. Chris Gramicchione, Monmouth County Prosecutor, reported that with 114 incidents reported (in the past year?) there were no charges brought, and no crimes were found to have been committed. He asked whether there was duplication of services with Youth Services and the Advisory Board. He suggested there is a need to identify a niche if the commission is to continue and acknowledged there may be some overlap even if we do. Tom Huth followed up with there is a need for "more implementation than policy."

(At some point in the discussion, there was another discussion as to whether a microphone was needed for those who speak softly and those who have some hearing loss. The commission has

consistently stated accommodations must be made to enable all to participate in discussions fully. It was agreed that this should not be debatable.)

Bob Honecker cited the need for 'young blood' saying new enthusiasm would bring passion and commitment and that a recruitment effort was needed. Jeff Schwartz pointed out that our manner of operation may put people off.

Rabbi Klein asked all to define the terms human relations, advocacy, and discrimination. He then asked each person to list two others present who they felt they know well and two others they felt they did not know very well. As we reviewed the definitions, Rabbi Klein pointed out that words are neutral but we bring our own views to them. He suggested each of us make a concerted effort to get to know those we do not know well.

Rabbi Klein offered that if we are a reactive body then perhaps the earlier motion pertains. But if we are not, then maybe there is another role we can play and we should consider this.

The following members spoke on these reflections - Chris Gramicchione, Bob Honecker, Ron Soponoff, Freeholder Curley, Fatima Jaffari and John Schwebel. Rabbi Klein asked for a show of hands as to who would be willing to 'be around the table.' Approximately 2/3 of those present raised their hands. Similarly, approximately 1/3 said they would be willing to work, e.g. expend energy, to do outreach in order to determine the role for the commission and attract members. (This could include going to high school principals and offer to partner, etc.)

Freeholder Curley said he wanted to stress the positivity of Monmouth County law enforcement in this area. Ted Lee stated we should become more 'lean and 'mean' and continue.

It was agreed that the Jan. 9 Executive Committee would continue the discussion with emphasis on structure, the hot line, outreach and recruitment of younger members.

A motion to table the original motion until the Full Commission meeting on Feb. 6 was made by Sherri West, seconded by Ron Soponoff, and the vote was 9 in favor, five opposed and 2 abstaining.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Submitted by Linda Zucaro