

A meeting of the **Human Relation Committee** was held tonight via web conference, Commissioner Irv Brockington, presiding. Commissioners also present via web-conference were Daniel B. Norris, Matthew Areman, and Ann Rappoport. Staff present was: Charlyn Battle, Director of Human Resources. There were no members of the Human Relations Committee present. Representation from the Human Relations Commission Committee included: Sam Seplow and Gretchen Wisheart. Also present was Cheltenham Township resident Liza Meiris.

1. Mr. Brockington called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. Mr. Brockington started the meeting off with introductions and proposed the following Human Relations Committee Mission Statement:

“The mission of the Human Relations Committee is to protect the dignity of all Cheltenham Township residents, create a Township of inclusion, equality, accessibility through education and outreach to insure the value of a diverse community”.
3. Mr. Brockington said he wanted this to be an open discussion and started off by asking “where do we want to go from here?” He said the Human Relations Committee should educate the public on violations of their rights.

Ms. Wisheart stated that Cheltenham Township is forward thinking and she would like to help improve policies and processes.

Mr. Brockington commented that we need to be more visible so residents know where they should go.

Mr. Areman said the Committee should be talking about where they see problems and how they should be communicating these problems.

Mr. Seplow commented that that is a good idea; someone on Facebook said that the Human Relations Committee was not active also and something about policing came up. Given the current climate, we should start with the Police.

Mr. Brockington said the committee should have Police involvements and asked how everyone feels about the Committee being Ad Hoc or if they should have a monthly meeting. He said another meeting will be scheduled and asked what should be addressed at that meeting. Ms. Meiris said they should talk about race in America and that the Committee should not be an Ad Hoc Committee because that’s why the committee hasn’t meet in ten years. She also stated that Cheltenham is not immune to all of the things going on now and the public needs a voice.

Mr. Norris said many of the commissioners were getting questions about the Police.

Ms. Meiris said it’s on us to speak to the community. I think it’s great that we are reaching out, because speaking your truth is hard. Mr. Areman said that he appreciated Ms. Meiris’s point about people speaking their truth and she should be commended for sticking her neck out. He also said this committee needs an outreach program and a strategy.

Ms. Wisheart also agreed with Ms. Meiris and that we need to look to see if our Police practices are up to date. Also it is important to meet with our neighbors so that they feel included and how do we make our community a better place to live.

Mr. Seplow commented that many residents don't know this Committee exists and that having regular meetings will let people know it does. Mr. Brockington reiterated his question about the committee having regular meetings. Ms. Wisehart said yes, for clarity and understanding and what can we do to move this forward.

Mr. Norris said there are many things we could be doing better with hiring, awarding minority contracts and hiring minorities and women. Mr. Brockington said yes, a lot of our sub-contractors have a lack of diversity. We also have a lack of diversity on our own Police force; we only have three African American males and two females on the force. Mr. Brockington stated that future meetings need to be set up.

Ms. Wisehart said we should drill down on our contracting issues and talk to the Chief about recruiting and she would love to learn more about it. Mr. Brockington said he will ask the Chief of Police to come to the next meeting.

Mr. Seplow said he would like to know how many complaints are filed by citizens regarding the Police, the reasons for the complaints and how complaints are handled.

Ms. Wisehart said she would like to hear about complaints or issues that we can talk about.

Mr. Areman commented that he has an anonymous email for people who are concerned about speaking out in public.

4. Mr. Brockington announced that the next meeting will be held on August 13, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. and emails will be sent out and information will be posted on the Township's website. Ms. Rappoport mentioned that she would like to see mailing go out with the details of the next meeting.

Ms. Wisehart Suggested a drop box or a special phone extension for anonymous complaints.

Mr. Areman said we will review the mission statement to see if it's appropriate for everyone.

Mr. Norris said the Commissioners are supportive of this committee.

5. Mr. Brockington adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.



Terry Fedorchak
Interim Township Manager

Per Charlyn J. Battle