

Minutes for the 3/24/09 meeting of the Newington Human Rights Commission:

Present: Monica Golec, Michael Munroe, Christine Andrews, Val Ginn, Tim Manke, Scott McBride, Ken Freidenberg, Phyllis DiCara

The meeting commenced at 7:00 pm.

Feedback from the Storyteller Program on 2/17/09: There was a positive reaction from all of the HRC members that attended the storyteller program. The attendance at the storyteller program was good and it was enjoyed by all ages of people. The HRC members agreed that this program was worth the money spent on it. It was agreed that the storyteller program should be brought back for the 2009 - 2010 fiscal year. It was recommended that the storyteller - Mary Jo Maichack - should be contacted 3 - 4 months before the planned event. Some suggestions for next year's storyteller event include:

- *Ask for a donation to the Human Services Food Bank on the promotional flyer for the event.
- *Be more proactive in sending out the promotional flyers - possibly have it included in the schools newsletter.
- *Position the HRC info sheet and Human Services needs sheet in a more accessible location.
- *Provide some ethnic food for after the event. Place the countries flag next to the corresponding ethnic food.
- *Make sure the HRC banner is in a visible location.

Memorial Day Parade Saturday May 23, 2009: Val Ginn stated that she spoke with Tracy Stapleton from the Special Olympics. Tracy said that the Special Olympics marchers could be split up between the HRC and the Special Olympics contingents. Val also spoke with Ann B. from Newington High School. Ann B. said that the high school will help out the HRC with marchers again this year. Val offered to contact some of the local ethnic clubs to see if they would be interested in marching in the parade. It was suggested that the HRC make a sign promoting the Human Service food bank and carry it during the parade. As a means of public outreach, Val stated that she will contact the local cable TV channels and let them know that the HRC is marching in the parade. Several members of the HRC volunteered to march in the parade. The suggestion was made that some members of the HRC could dress up as a vegetable or food product to promote the Human Services Food bank. There was discussion on whether to make the costume or rent the costume. Christine Andrews offered to do some research on this matter.

Human Services Report from Ken Freidenberg: Ken stated that the HRC has about \$400.00 to use before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2009. Ken also stated that the HRC's budget of \$1500.00 for 2009 - 2010 was included in the Town Manager proposed budget. Ken reviewed the Human Services Department Monthly Report. The Department continues to see an increased need in its programs. An \$8000.00 grant was submitted to the United Way in conjunction with the Congregational Church, who will act as the fiduciary. Allstate made a donation of \$2500.00 to the Food Bank. Ken also reported that foreclosure filings in Newington went from 8 in 2007 to 31 in 2008.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the HRC will be on **Tuesday April 28, 2009 at 7:00 pm.**

Michael Munroe - Secretary