

**Franklin Human Relations Commission  
Minutes of February 25, 2008 Meeting  
Historic Conference Room, Public Library**

**Present:** Gary Rosenthal, Chairman, Mylo Thompson, Detective Kevin B. Fitzharris, Dr. Rebecca White Johnson, Ike Agudosi, and Edna Arguello Hitchner.

**Absent:** Murray Rothblatt, Nora Catiis, Willie B. Goods, John Tibbs, Robert Stone, Marilyn Altman, Det. Sean Hebbon, Councilman Rajiv Prasad, Council Liaison.

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Gary reminded commission members that one vacancy remains, following the resignation of Chandrankant Desai.

Gary reported that the Franklin Youth Initiative has become a project and collaboration among many township organizations.

Gary reported that at the Feb. 25 afternoon meeting of the Week of the People committee, it was decided that the Human Relations Commission would again be responsible for the Diversity Film Festival, which will be held on Wednesday, August 6, 2008. The dates of the weeklong festivities are August 2-9. At the same meeting, it was announced that the Township would not be supporting the 2008 Week of the People. Gary has written a letter to Council asking why the decision was made to withdraw their support.

Mr. Jim Peeler, Chairman of the New Jersey Human Relations Council, attended the meeting at the invitation of Gary Rosenthal. Mr. Peeler spoke about the efforts of the organization he leads. Created in 1992 by legislative action, the members of the State Council are appointed by the Governor and the Legislature. The Council meets every other month, but not during the summer. Mr. Peeler was recently reappointed to two more years. He said, "I want to see every HRC serve their counties. We stand behind every HRC in the state." He added that not all 21 counties in the state have a council but the goal is to encourage the establishment of such. He reported that every existing HRC is eligible for up to \$1,500 reimbursement for diversity projects and those involving the elimination of bias. Receipts must be submitted by the Commission to be reimbursed.

The NJHRC can also serve as a resource to local HRCs looking to organize events or print materials, such as brochures to promote their activities.

Mr. Peeler invited the Commission to attend the next meeting of the State Council, which will be held on March 19 at Thomas Edison College in Trenton. He supplied us with the *State Human Relations Commission Operational Guidelines, which are attached.*

This year the state HRC has adopted the theme of youth + education + diversity = New Jersey's future. To that end, the Council also encourages the establishment of junior HRC's. There are currently such groups in Burlington and Camden. Both are modeled after the county and municipal HRC model, he said.

Other current projects of the state HRC include work dealing with land discrimination and firearm retrieval program. Mr. Peeler happily reported that the organization will soon have a newsletter. In answer to a question of clarification from Detective Kevin Fitzharris, and Dr. Rebecca Johnson, Mr. Peeler said that money can be used for giveaways, for special local HRC projects, and to fund personnel for special programs designed to target specific diversity goals, etc.

Discussion of finding funding sources for the Township's Peace Plaza was tabled to the next meeting.

The next meeting will be on Monday March 24, 2008. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

Respectively submitted  
Edna Arguello Hitchner  
Acting Secretary