

Relations Commission Meeting

Minutes of 10/22

Present: Kamla J. Sharma, Elangkathir Elamaran, Diya Patel, Sharon Czebotar, Nora Catiis, Samina Sattar, John Tibbs, Councilman Alex Kharazi, Edna Arguello-Hitchner, Linda Montgomery-Williams, Gary Rosenthal

Excused: E. Poustchi, Pete Clark, Shubhendu Singh

Absent: John Samba

Guest: Bob Lacorte, Chairman 250 year celebration

Police: Officer Marcelo Dos Reis

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

Guest Report: Bob Lacorte is the chair of the 250-year celebration committee. At Franklin Day, colonial flags representing battle flags were present. There is a flyer going around town advertising the Franklin 250 celebration and urging people to sign up for volunteer opportunities. Coins are being designed that are 10 dollars each, available online and at the library. These coins are being produced for Franklin's 250th celebration. Passports are also being made in order to raise money for the celebration. The passport's purpose is to collect stamps from various businesses around the township. Once the passport reaches 15 stamps, residents can turn it in for a prize (such as a shirt). Each month will have a different event happening. September will have the biggest event, with Colonial Day at Colonial Park. There will be a reenactment of a battle scene at this event. A question was brought up regarding the spotlight of diversity within the celebration, and highlighting the role of women and African Americans. Another question was asked if other towns are also contributing, and the answer is yes; however, our town is quite ahead in organizing this event. Women will be presented, and they will show what they did during colonial times during Colonial Day. The Long Island infantry regiment, a primarily African American regiment, will be present to speak about their role in the war. Interestingly, Franklin Township was one of the very first townships to have fireworks in the county. The initial budget for this undertaking was \$50,000; despite this, it is expected to raise about \$5,000 from the coins and \$5,000 from the passports. There will also be small events at the high school related to the celebration. Inclusion of the Lenape tribes that were located in Somerset, NJ, is deemed crucial. One role that the HRC can have is promoting the celebration, as well as participating in fundraising and volunteering. It is hinted that there will be a surprise regarding the celebration at the next Council meeting on 10/28.

Police Report: This Saturday, October 25th, will be the DEA takeback event, in which residents will be able to turn in expired medication safely. In addition, there will be a Trunk-Or-Treat event on the same day, from 12-3. A question arose about numerous accidents happening on Easton Ave, and whether the police will get involved.

Other Business: Regarding the revised brochure, the brochure was meant to be distributed during Franklin Day, but the HRC did not have a table over there. It is hoped that there will be a partnership with the high school in order to print out these brochures. A presentation was sent for everyone to look at regarding the flags/banners to be put up to honor heroes and veterans. There are still multiple steps that need to be taken, such as the distribution of the form to gauge interest. There was a motion made to proceed with the proposal for Franklin Township to adopt the Hometown Heroes project for 2026. The motion passed. The main thing happening this month is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which will receive two proclamations from the Council.

Sister to Sister is an organization that supports and raises awareness for those who have breast cancer or who have survived it. They support these people financially and direct them to places to get further help. There was also a proclamation regarding ageism, in which older people experienced discrimination in jobs, etc.

There will be no meeting in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The next meeting will be on December 17th.

Meeting adjourned at **7:52**