

Franklin Township Human

Relations Commission Meeting

Minutes of 12/17

Present: Gary Rosenthal, Samina Sattar, Sharon Czebotar, Kamla J. Sharma, Edna Arguello Hitcher, Ron Poustchi, Councilman Alex Kharazi, Linda Montgomery-Williams ,Elangkathir Elamaran

Excused: Diya Patel, Shubhendu Singh, Nora Catiis

Absent: John Tibbs, John Samba, Pete Clark

Guest: Kiera Radvanski ,Chair of Vocal Music Department, High School

Police: Officer **Marcello Dos Reis**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

Minutes of October 22nd were approved

Guest Report: Kiera Radvanski is the head of the local music department, putting Franklin Township on the map this week through a performance at the Rockefeller Center in New York. Her group, the Madrigals, appeared on Channel 4 and performed at the Rockefeller Center tree lighting. They also performed for the township council and received a township commendation. Ms. Radvanski grew up in Franklin Township. She is in her 10th year of teaching in the district. She transferred into the high school

for the theater and music program. Her mother is a musician/singer, and she grew up singing in the church. She developed a passion for teaching and sharing music in high school. She is the director of the Madrigal Singers (Gold'n Blues). The Madrigals started 35 years ago. She was a student conductor of the madrigals herself when she was in high school. When she took over the program two years ago, the program was still recovering from COVID. She was brainstorming ways to improve the program and restore its glory. She came up with the idea to implement pop, acapella, and contemporary music. The Madrigals currently have 21 members in the group. This year, they had the opportunity to audition for the Star Choir Competition run by NBC and Telemundo 47. The prize for the competition was to perform at the Rockefeller Tree Lighting in New York City. Surprisingly, her twin sister won the competition the year prior. Due to the competition, they were gifted \$10,000 and yesterday, they were given the opportunity to do a debrief on their performance. They were given another \$11,000 from the Kelly Clarkson Show. She aims to explore the world of acapella and contemporary music, and states that attending the National Acapella Conference is a great way to do so. Due to the new gifts, the Madrigals are now able to attend this competition in Orlando, Florida. This opportunity will set them off on their new "Gold'n Blues" trajectory and expand the Madrigals' range. The conference is a great educational opportunity, and Ms. Radvanski is hopeful that they will be invited to perform here. The Madrigals were also invited to perform at the State Capitol and received commendations from the State Assembly. They will also be performing tomorrow at the BOE assembly. They were invited to the MLK foundation dinner in January, as well. Ms. Radvanski commends her students for working so hard to reach the national stage, and giving back to their community by embarking on a "district tour" of places throughout the township. What's interesting about the style that the Madrigals sing is that it is meant to be a smaller group, but there is a separate choir with more than 50 students that is offered as an elective in the school. The Madrigals will be performing at the 250th year celebration.

Police Report: Officer Dos Reis reported: There will be a Toy Drive on December 22nd at the Community Relations Bureau on Hamilton Street. Things in the town are going great. There are two programs that offer improvements to security; one is offered by Homeland Security, and the other is offered by the State. These programs are a great way to improve security through the installation of cameras, fences, etc. at places of worship and other places. If requested, representatives from the FBI and Homeland Security will audit facilities for free and make recommendations to improve security of the premises. Our township police department will speak at facilities and go over

recommendations for security, drills, and other ways to ensure the safe-being of those in our township.

Other Business: Regarding the 250th year celebration, there was a proposal drafted in order to ensure that those from all backgrounds will be honored and celebrated during the celebration. There was research done regarding Native Americans' roles in colonial history, and how to incorporate them within the events that are already planned in order to ensure that they are acknowledged. Particularly in Franklin, there were Indian villages that were present at the time. There is also a search for representatives from the Native American community in order to ensure that the proposal is sensitive to events that took place with Native Americans in colonial history. About a month ago, there was a Thanksgiving proclamation that recognized Native Americans. Before this proclamation, a Native American advocacy group was contacted, which opposed the proclamation. Therefore, there are efforts to contact such groups to ensure that Native Americans want to be involved in the 250th celebration in the first place. It is beneficial to recognize the Native Americans instead of ignoring their overall presence on the land. The last that was discussed regarding the revised brochure, there were communications with the high school in order to utilize their printers to print out the brochure.

Edna reported that there needs to be revisions and feedback to the proposal for the Hometown Heroes project to ensure that it is able to come to fruition during the warmer months. The motion to pass the proposal to the council was passed. It will be brought up at a council meeting.

Resolution (motion) Passed for approval for the following 2026 meeting dates. January 28, February 25, March 25, April 22, June 24, July 22, August 26, September 23, October 28, December 23.

The following HRC Commissioners Terms of Office will be renewed to 2028, Gary Rosenthal, Samina Sattar, Ron Poustchi, Pete Clark

The next meeting will be January 28th

Meeting adjourned 7:42

