Town of Boone
Human Relations Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 15, 2023
5:30 P.M.

Members Present: Tiffany Christian, Laura Buck, Sean Morris, Anneliese Thomae Elias, Merideth Sánchez-Sánchez, Joan Brook, Harley Atkins, Dana Bango

Members Absent: Emily Brewer, Steven Yow

Council Liaisons present: Virginia Roseman

Staff Present: Laney Pilkington

Call to Order:
Vice Chair Mr. Atkins called the meeting to order at 5:43pm. Dr. Christian made a motion to begin, and Mr. Morris seconded. With all in favor, the meeting was officially open.

Ms. Roseman petitioned to add an item to the agenda: reading the rules of public comment used by the HPC. Dr. Christian made a motion to amend the agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Morris and was passed unanimously.

October 18th meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with change on the website, spelling of Anneliese. Ms. Bango will email Ms. Harmon about the change as well as the preferred name prefixes of the HRC members including changing to Dr. Christian and Mx. Thomae Elias. Motion was made and seconded by Mr. Morris and Dr. Christian and appended minutes were adopted unanimously.

Section 4 of the agenda will be tabled until December regarding HRC training opportunities including mediation, communications and facilitating consensus, upon request of Ms. Brewer, who is absent.

Discussion of Charge:

Dates and Events:

- Boone Boo-Mr. Atkins reported that overall, the tabling was a success. Adults loved the food bags and kids loved the treats. All candy was used. The cold weather and nature of the event made the tabling more of a buffet line than a place people would gather. Suggestions for next year include having a sign-up sheet for an event to stuff bags with literature prior to the Boo event or have stuffing at the October meeting.
- Food Boxes at Stick Boy and other places-Ms. Buck gave the update about collecting food and Second Day Harvest, which occurs on Tuesdays usually.
- Native Heritage Month Proclamation-Mayor Futrelle found and submitted a Native Heritage Month proclamation, borrowed from another source.

- Appalachian Heritage Month Proclamation-according to Ms. Roseman, is to be read at the 6pm TOB meeting on 11/22/23.
- December calendar event-public mailbox with question proposed: what do you celebrate for the holidays this time of year? Mr. Atkins and Mr. Morris will text Brielle by December 1st to find out about the mailbox, the possibility of asking the question, a sandwich board sign, and pencils.
- Other December events include the Christmas parade on December 9, the lighting of the solar tree on December 1 (always on First Friday) and the lighting of the Menorah on the first night of Hannukah. Both lightings take place on the Jones House Porch.
- Other December calendar possibilities-December 3rd, International Day for People with Disabilities. How about a poster to Laney for posting about disability awareness, volunteering, and the special Olympics? Is there time to have a proclamation written? Ms. Roseman will look at other proclamations to see if there is language already written and can be used and Mr. Morris may write a draft. December 4th or 13th TOB meetings could have an agenda item for this approval. Dr. Christian suggested a motion to have a social media post to commemorate, Ms. Brook set forth the motion and Mr. Morris seconded. All approved except for Mx. Thomae Elias, who felt that actions should be more intentional, and actions shouldn't be rushed.
- Upcoming noted calendar dates-
    1. January-Human Trafficking Prevention Month-Mx. Thomae Elias is working with The Bridge International to bring the reality of trafficking to AppState
    2. January 1st-World Peace Day
    3. January 16th-Martin Luther King Jr. Day
    4. January 27th-World Holocaust Remembrance Day-January 25-30 will include 5 events including planting of tree, an art opening at the Turchin Center of Mark Chagall and the Jewish Diaspora (Jan 25th), a Friday Evening Shabbat which Ms. Brook invited everyone (Jan 26th), Appalachian Theater film (Jan 27th), Turchin Speaker at the Exhibition (Jan 29th) and a service to close out the week (Jan 30th). Events are being sponsored by the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies at AppState
    5. February-Black History Month, Ethnic Equality Month and Human Relations Month
    6. February 20th-World Day of Social Justice
    7. March- Women's History Month (Gender Equality Month)

Discussion of proclamations and their effectiveness ensued. How many are too many? Ms. Brook commented that they are not encouraging of active engagement. Ms. Roseman explained that they are put on file as a legal state document and reflect the ethics of our community. There is a record of all proclamations so that there is a history of our community.

For all communications including posts, posters, fliers, etc: please include contacting the HRC with any questions or concerns. HRC contact information would include the phone

number 828-268-6200 and the appropriate contact would be “The Town Manager”. Email should be directed to the town manager as well.

The HRC Survey was distributed, along with fliers. Stickers will be made by Ms. Bango with Spanish instructions and Mx. Thomae Elias will email an improved Spanish paper version to the HRC members.

A discussion of the proposed HRC resource page concluded that resources exist on multiple pages including the Hunger & Health Coalition and the document already created by the IJC. Suggestions included a tab and a link to other websites and resources in our new HRC page to be created in the spring. Also brought up again was needed a logo for the HRC, which the communications department of the TOB will assist with. The resource list will be revisited.

Final agenda item was Ms. Roseman’s presentation of Rules for Public Comment, which grew out of a contentious TOB Historic Preservation Commission public hearing about historic unmarked graves of 256 bodies of enslaved people who lived and died in Boone, including newborns. The graves were not well maintained, and the meeting was held to highlight this neglected part of Boone’s history. Rules for public comment were developed and included under Section 35.04 of meeting procedures. Meeting rules include: waiting to be recorded, signing up to comment prior to the meeting, being called from the list by the meeting chair to comment, a chair having the discretion to appoint a spokesperson if more than one person has the same comment, respectful treatment of all commenters, proper decorum, being warned by the chair of interference that violates the rules and norms of the meeting and possible removal by the chair if warning is not heeded, etc. More can be discussed at next month’s meeting regarding training and understanding/ modification of rules. How are social norms and decorum defined?

Discussion of Next Steps:

Mr. Atkins will ask Ms. Brewer about the December meeting, which is normally December 20th. A virtual meeting could also be scheduled earlier if the December meeting cannot be held on the 20th due to the December holidays.

Adjournment:

With no further discussion, Mr. Atkins initiated a motion to adjourn at 8:17pm (Mx. Sánchez-Sánchez forwarded, and Dr. Christian seconded). Members unanimously voted to adopt the motion.