



Human Relations Advisory Council (HRAC)
County of Lehigh

MEETING MINUTES
January 2, 2024

The meeting of the HRAC was held at 12:04 p.m. by Zoom video conference. A recording of this meeting is available at <https://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Community-Economic-Development/Human-Relations-Advisory-Council>.

ATTENDING

Angela Baio (AB), Carmen Bell (CB), Liz Bradbury (LB)(Vice-Chair), Tony Branco (TB), Nagi Latefa (NL), Luis A. Perez Jr. (LP)

Staff: Frank Kane (FK), Cyndi King (CK)

Absent: Maryanell Agosto (MA), Commissioner Zach Cole-Borghi (ZCB), Yorman De La Rosa (YDLR), Guillermo Lopez Jr. (CHAIR), Paschall Simpson (PS)

Public: Heather Harlen, Emmaus resident

VICE-CHAIR called the meeting to order.

Roll call. Quorum obtained. Meeting is being recorded. Public will have access to that recording on the department's website (see opening paragraph above).

VICE-CHAIR asked for a motion to approve the 11/6/23 and 12/4/23 meeting minutes. TB made the motion; motion seconded by CB. Unanimous voice vote approval of minutes.

VICE CHAIR recognized Heather Harlen. Ms. Harlen introduced herself; she is interested in the work being done by the HRAC and she is looking to find ways to support the HRAC in its work.

OLD BUSINESS

FK spoke about this evening's swearing-in of the one re-elected and three newly elected commissioners at 7 p.m. followed by an organizational meeting at 7:30 p.m.. No other business

will be conducted at the Board of Commissioners (BOC) meeting tonight. The next scheduled BOC meeting is January 10. LB is meeting with County assistant solicitor Catherine Roseberry (CR) on 1/5/23 to review and reestablish wording of the ordinance to ensure that it encompasses the intended protections. There will be two clauses added; there will be clarification on the topic of the investigator and related budgetary aspects suggested by the Administration; and all of these will be included in the newly rewritten ordinance. The amendments are being written into the ordinance because many [of the stipulations] have already been agreed upon. LB reminded everyone that the HRAC has been working on the ordinance, with legal and architectural assistance from CR, for 2-1/2 years. FK agreed with everything LB said about rewording the ordinance with two exceptions: first, FK would like clarification from CR on exact legal provisions preventing an officer in a political party from being an appointee in a Lehigh County, Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Second, FK might ask LB for another meeting with the Administration to further discuss the portion of the ordinance concerning the definition of “employer.” LB is happy to meet with the Administration. The ordinance will receive another first-read and at a later BOC meeting receive a second-reading and then will go to a vote. Once the ordinance is passed, the HRAC can continue to meet a few times but technically [the HRAC] will be dissolved and the newly enacted law will put forth the necessity of the BOC and the Administration to appoint commissioners onto the Human Relations Commission. NL questioned if there was wording in the ordinance providing a timeline in which the BOC and Administration must act on these appointments; discussion ensued as to why there was not timeline language. LB will discuss including timeline language into the ordinance with CR. LB plans to text the new commissioners and ask for a meeting to discuss the ordinance. LB offered anyone who wanted to join meeting with the commissioners and her to do so. CB and LP are familiar with some of the new commissioners and NL plans to attend the swearing-in. As schedules allow, CB, LP, and TB would like to be included in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

CLOSING AGENDA ITEMS

Heather Harlen asked for a copy of the proposed legislation. Staff will ensure that Ms. Harlen has that information. LB also supplied her email address should Ms. Harlen have questions.

LB called for any other input (none) and any other announcements (none) and asked for a motion to close the meeting. NL made the motion which was seconded by TB. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia L. King