

DURHAM HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022
3:00 PM
Council Chambers – Durham Town Hall

Members Present: Chair Kitty Marple, Administrator Todd Selig, Business Manager Gail Jablonski, Dr. Janet Perkins-Howland, The Rev. Richard Belshaw

Members Absent: None

Others Present: None

I. Call to Order

Chair Kitty Marple called the meeting to order at 3PM and introductions of members present were made.

II. Land Acknowledgment Statement

Chair Marple read the Durham, New Hampshire Land, Water, and Life Acknowledgment Statement:

The town of Durham, New Hampshire wishes to acknowledge the spiritual and physical connection maintained by the Pennacook, Abenaki and Wabanaki peoples to N'dakinna (homeland), aki (land), nibi (water), lolakwikak (flora) and awaasak (fauna). New Hampshire has been home to these Indigenous people for thousands of years. The residents of Durham acknowledge the ongoing hardships endured by our Indigenous neighbors after the loss of their unceded homelands which we now steward, and we will work to foster relationships to support the well-being of Indigenous people who carry forward the traditions of their ancestors.

III. Approval of July 12 and August 25, 2022, Meeting Minutes

The Rev. Belshaw noted a number of non-substantive amendments and clarifications to both the July and August minutes, which have been included.

July 12, 2022

Chair Marple made a MOTION to APPROVE the minutes of July 12, 2022, as amended. The motion was SECONDED by Dr. Perkins-Howland and PASSED unanimously 5-0.

August 25, 2022

Chair Marple made a MOTION to APPROVE the minutes of August 25, 2022, as amended. The motion was SECONDED by The Rev. Belshaw and PASSED unanimously 5-0.

IV. Possible Racial Unity Day in 2023 – Has there been any additional follow up on this matter?

No additional follow up on this issue has come forward from Shawna Coppola, Racial Unity Team (RUT) regarding Racial Unity Day since her attendance at the Durham HRC's meeting on July 12, 2022. The Rev. Belshaw said because it would be a long-range planning type of event if Durham decided to have its own Racial Unity Day, he thought it would be good for one of the Durham HRC members to attend Exeter's event this year on September 17th to gain an understanding of what types of activities and learning experiences are offered. He said that he would plan to attend.

V. Update on Planning for the Upcoming Bias Training Workshops in October

Administrator Selig said that the end of last week he, Admin. Assistant Jennie Berry, Kara Kobunski, Tara Flippio, and Bart Crawford held a Zoom meeting and talked about the logistics surrounding the upcoming bias training workshops. Ms. Kobunski will be sending over some possible dates and times in October which would include two daytime sessions and two evening sessions. In addition, Ms. Kobunski will work on a draft invitation for Mr. Selig to review and once it is approved, Ms. Berry will send it out to all Town employees, board, commission, and committee members, including the Town Council.

Administrator Selig also noted that a contract was sent to him that he has signed, as well as an initial invoice, which was also processed. The total cost will be \$14,000 for planning the workshops and holding the four sessions. \$10,000 will be paid by the grant that Dr. Perkins-Howland secured for the Town and \$4,000 will come from the Administrator's "contracted services" budget line item.

VI. Planned Activity for Indigenous Peoples' Day in Durham – Dr. Meghan C.L. Howey, UNH Professor of Anthropology & Earth Systems Research Center, along with Paul and Denise Pouliot, will speak on their efforts in Durham at the October 3, 2022, Town Council meeting

Administrator Selig said that Dr. Meghan Howey has done a lot of great research and he felt she will have a lot to talk about at the October 3rd Council meeting regarding Durham's indigenous past.

Administrator Selig noted that the Town will again fly the flag that the Pouliot's presented to the Town at the Council's October 4th meeting last year. At that meeting, Paul Pouliot explained the flag symbolizes that the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki People are the people of the white pines. They are part of the Wabanaki confederation which is symbolized in the dawn seen with the sun rising. The three roots of the white pine represent the three rivers that the Abenaki and Pennacook people used, which were the Connecticut, the Merrimack, and the Piscataqua rivers. The other symbologies are the canoes and the waterways. The wisdom curl motifs in the four corners of the flag represent peace and love. They are symbolic and are one of the art forms used by the Wabanaki people. He noted that some tribes use squares and rectangles and other shapes. Mr. Pouliot also noted that the Wabanaki people, all the way from Maine down to New Hampshire, used a curl lenient design as shown on the flag.

Administrator Selig said that at the beginning of the Council meeting on October 3rd, Council Chair Marple will also read the Land Acknowledgment Statement.

Dr. Perkins-Howland said that the Conservation Commission has had some discussion about honoring indigenous people with land in Durham.

Chair Marple said that Dr. Perkins-Howland would need to ask Conservation Commission Chair Jake Kritzer for more information about what discussion the commission had regarding this topic. Chair Marple felt that if any private individual in Durham wanted to include in their Will donating their land to indigenous people that could certainly happen, but she did not know how one would go down that road from a municipal standpoint and asked Administrator Selig if he had any comments. Administrator Selig replied that he did not know how that could occur and that he had not given any thought to the matter.

Dr. Perkins-Howland suggested bringing some ideas forward to the Town Council about holding some sort of ceremonial recognition to occur on Indigenous Peoples' Day. Chair Marple asked Dr. Perkins-Howland to email her ideas and thoughts to the HRC members and then Administrator Selig could bring something forward to a future Council meeting.

IX. Other Business

Dr. Perkins-Howland asked whether there had been any white supremacy issues in Durham given recent activities in Dover and Portsmouth.

Administrator Selig replied that over the summer, there were a few leaflets that had been tacked to telephone poles in the downtown area but that was all. The Town doesn't know who placed the information on the poles.

Mr. Selig said that at its September 12, 2022, meeting, the Council, upon receiving a petition drafted and signed by concerned members of the Riverwoods community, passed a resolution condemning hate speech and reaffirming Durham's commitment to safeguarding people's rights to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and condemning those who would choose to divide its citizens.

Dr. Perkins-Howland suggested that the resolution be placed in the next Friday Updates to inform Durham residents of its passage, which Mr. Selig said he would do.

Dr. Perkins-Howland handed out copies of the resolution passed by the City of Dover, NH condemning racial and religious supremacist activities.

The Rev. Belshaw said he would like to add to the next agenda an update regarding the matter of immigration and housing.

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, November 4, 2022, at 3PM.

X. Adjourn

The Rev. Richard Belshaw MOVED to adjourn the meeting. The motion was SECONDED by Dr. Perkins-Howland and PASSED unanimously, 5-0.

The meeting **ADJOURNED** at 3:51 PM.

Prepared by Jennie Berry, Administrative Assistant