

**Durham Human Rights Commission**  
**June 18, 2025 at 4:30 pm**

**In attendance:**

Richard Belshaw (Chair)  
Janet Perkins-Howland  
Deborah Hirsch Mayer  
Kathy Collins  
Robin Vogt (Town Council Representative, non-voting)  
Todd Selig (Town Administrator, non-voting)

**Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement**

Chair Belshaw called the meeting to order and read the land acknowledgement. He noted that the meeting would not be recorded, nor would there be a live broadcast. Chair Belshaw also stated there would be no public comments because nobody from the public was in attendance.

**Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Hirsch-Mayer moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Perkins-Howland seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

**Discussion regarding US Customs and Immigration (ICE) enforcement efforts**

Commissioner Perkins-Howland had supplied a list of local legal resources in New Hampshire during the May 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Belshaw recommended that this list serve as the basis to which we add any additional information for the community.

Commissioner Perkins-Howland said the list can help answer people's questions about enforcement. She wondered what kinds of questions are people asking. Are they wondering about people's rights as citizens or the rights of immigrants during enforcement efforts? She asked if the Human Rights Commission should bring in speakers or create an event to inform the community about our rights as citizens. Commissioner Perkins-Howland asked Town Administrator Todd Selig to weigh in about the kinds of questions the town is getting – are they mostly about rights as individuals or about protecting immigrants?

Town Administrator Selig responded that some questions are from immigrants with concerns, however, he noted that the town hasn't heard from immigrants directly. Community members are hearing from them and asking the town on their behalf. For example, what does one do if ICE shows up at your door? What can citizens do to help individuals who are being targeted? Town Administrator Selig stated that another question that has come up is about what role, if any, the Durham Police Department will play in ICE enforcement.

Town Administrator Selig noted that Councilor Curtis Register's draft resolution, shared at the Town Council meeting on June 16, 2025, dealing with the issue of ICE enforcement and whether or not Durham will cooperate or will adopt Sanctuary City characteristics, will be discussed at the Town Council meeting on July 7, 2025.

Town Administrator Selig also shared that the Durham Public Library will have a staff meeting on June 25, when Katherine Haraki of the ACLU will present a session, *Know Your Rights in the 100 Mile Border Zone*. Information about this will be included in the Friday Updates. Additionally, some residents have dropped

off flyers and little versions of The US Constitution and have expressed opposition to the government banning any community from becoming a Sanctuary City, which could mean a loss of state grant funding and/or sanctions. (Later in the meeting, Town Administrator Selig noted Durham has never been a Sanctuary City, despite a proposal in 2017 to become one. Durham Town Council opted not to do so.)

Town Administrator Selig discussed the recent incident believed to be connected to ICE per Commissioner Perkins-Howland's request he do so. In summary, the Southern New Hampshire SWAT team needed a location to practice maneuvers, which they do regularly. This practice had nothing to do with ICE. The University of New Hampshire made the former New England Center available. The police officers, dressed in their practice gear, had lunch in town, which was noticed by some residents and perceived to be connected to ICE. It was not. It was a regular training session for the NH SWAT team. Town Administrator Selig asked UNH to let the town know in advance if events like this happen again so that the town can put out a notice to the community.

Commissioner Perkins-Howland received several texts about it from community members, and she thanked Town Administrator Selig for responding so quickly.

Town Administrator Selig said that federal and state law enforcement don't have to let the town know they are coming; to do so is a courtesy. He said that it's an asset to have Durham Police on stand-by because they can evaluate a warrant and observe what's occurring. Chair Belshaw said this should be noted for community members, and Town Administrator Selig concurred.

Town Councilor Robin Vogt said there will be a link tree of resources for the town website, accessible on the front page.

Commissioner Perkins-Howland asked Councilor Vogt to provide more information about the Town Council discussion about this topic. Councilor Vogt said that the Town Council has received emails about ICE concerns. At the last meeting (June 16), public comments were solely focused on the issue, which was the first time this had happened. He said at least nine people in a row spoke on the topic, including a non-binary person who has chosen to leave Durham because they no longer feel safe in NH. Councilor Vogt noted that this was an eye-opening moment, and said that public comment questions included: What are we doing with the Link Tree? What are the latest trends? What are citizens' rights? What do I tell my neighbor/students who are immigrants? What are my rights as a student/Durham resident? During a roundtable discussion, it was evident that the community concerns are increasing, and that the Town Council has to 'buckle down' to get resources out.

Commissioner Hirsch Mayer said that she received an email on Monday afternoon, prior to the 6/16 Town Council meeting, that invited people to offer public comments on this topic. She thought it was sent through SWAN (Seacoast Women's Action Network). She continued to share that having information on the town website and Friday Updates would be great, but she also noted that some people don't read the Friday updates or look at the website. Commissioner Hirsch Mayer also suggested providing information at the Durham Public Library circulation desk.

Councilor Vogt noted that we have to be careful to make sure we are sharing accurate information and valid resources.

Town Administrator Selig said that it was important for the town to share information from non-partisan groups, like The League of Women Voters, and the ACLU.

Chair Belshaw summarized that we need a multi-prong approach, including resources in various locations and visually appealing materials. This led to suggestions such as:

- Councilor Vogt will review the Link Tree to figure out what's important to share and to reduce redundancies
- Commissioner Perkins-Howland suggested asking the Durham Police Department to present about their role to the public the way they presented so clearly to us. She asked if they could put out a public statement or letter.
- Town Administrator Selig responded by suggesting that perhaps there might be a stand-alone email about how Durham Police deal with ICE enforcement.
- Chair Belshaw noted that this could be added to other materials as well, for further reach.
- Chair Belshaw suggested making materials available at ORCSD locations in the fall.
- Commissioner Hirsch Mayer suggested a static shot on DCAT as well as posts in neighborhood Facebook groups.

Chair Belshaw asked who would take on the various tasks.

- Councilor Vogt – Link Tree
- Commissioner Hirsch Mayer – various FB groups
- Commissioner Collins – Know Your Rights infographic on CANVA

Chair Belshaw asked for ideas about information that we could add to our resources.

- Commissioner Hirsch Mayer mentioned the Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Commission training about upstanding/bystanding led by Maggie Fogarty
- Commissioner Perkins-Howland said there was a Monadnock resource that was helpful. Town Administrator Selig said he'd resend it to the Human Rights Commission.
- Chair Belshaw said that Councilor Em Friedrichs mentioned that the Dover Police Department had a good description and accounting of procedures. Town Administrator Selig noted that this dates back to 2012, and that it's very similar to Durham's.

Commissioner Collins asked what information do we want included in a brief, easy to access infographic?  
What are our rights for citizens, immigrants, and local businesses?  
How can someone help when/if there is an ICE event?  
Additional general information

Commissioner Hirsch Mayer said that there should be nothing timely or dated on the infographic, and that it might include information about the Durham Police Department's role, rights and responsibilities, and resources.

Commissioner Perkins-Howland asked if we know anyone who works with ICE and if anyone wants to help gather potential speakers for an event sponsored by the Human Rights Commission. Commissioner Collins said she would help. Commissioner Perkins-Howland asked that everyone come with to our next meeting with some ideas. Commissioner Perkins-Howland will be point-person for this event. Councilor Vogt said that Maggie Fogarty could be a possible speaker.

Chair Belshaw added that we should also bring materials to look at during our upcoming meeting.

Town Administrator Selig will send along a summary of the Durham Police meeting Q & A from April.

**Other Business**

Chair Belshaw suggested that we delay approval of our May meeting minutes until our next meeting.

The Durham Human Rights Commission's next meeting will be on July 2 at 4:30 pm.

**Motion to adjourn**

Commissioner Hirsch Mayer made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Collins seconded the motion.

It was approved unanimously.