



County of Onondaga
Office of Diversity and Inclusion

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J. Ryan McMahon, II
County Executive

Monica Williams
Chief Diversity Officer

Human Rights Commission Minutes
September 23, 2020 Meeting

This draft was APPROVED at the Oct. 21, 2020 HRC Meeting

Commissioners Present: Dan Fellman, Sanjay Chhablani, Dave Pasinski, John Rushing, Leo Sanchez, Suzette Melendez, Rosalie Young, Tricia Wittkowski (phone), Chol Majok

Commissioners Excused: Mary Alice Smothers

Commissioners Absent: Khadijo Abdulkhadir, Ali Adan, Rev. Roosevelt Baums, Barbara Johnson, Liban Mohamed, Migdalia Morales, Al-amin Muhammad, Francis Parks,

Community Members Present: Mikiel Anderson, Mary Kuhn, Peggy Chase

County Staff Present: Monica Williams & Montanette Murphy

- 1) Conversation with Chief Diversity Officer: The meeting began at 5:43 p.m. Chief Diversity Officer Monica Williams presented details on the new direction of the Human Rights Commission. Sanjay Chhablani, Rabbi Daniel Fellman, Suzette Melendez, Dave Pasinski, Rosalie Young, Chol Majok and John Rushing raised questions and offered their opinions about the information presented. Rabbi Dan stated the new direction was “contradictory to what we’ve done” based on guidance and approval from former County Executive Joanie Mahoney and other leaders. Monica Williams commented that bylaws put in place contradicted the HRC’s Local Law and that returning to the Local Law will allow the commissioners to work collaboratively with community members and stakeholders. Commissioners expressed a myriad of concerns about the information presented, including the legality of the changes and committed to take further action. County Legislators Mary Kuhn and Peggy Chase offered their assistance to commissioners, stating that they would take a look into the changes. Rabbi Dan stated that the commission would continue to function as it always has until further notice from legal authorities.
- 2) August 2020 meeting minutes were approved.
- 3) Chair’s report given by Rabbi Dan and Sanjay Chhablani.
- 4) Administrator’s report: Commission won’t be able to produce voter information cards for new Americans because of budget constraints within county departments.
- 5) Commissioners gave updates on the November 18th public hearing on the impact of Covid-19, Election 2020 and Police Reform initiatives. The commission also sought to obtain a more exhaustive list of community contacts and stakeholders in preparation for the public hearing. Commission is aware it must produce a 2020 annual report.
- 6) No new business.
- 7) No new announcements.
- 8) Chol motioned to end the meeting at 7:55. John Rushing seconded. Meeting ended at 7:55.