



WHRC General Meeting
Tuesday, April 25, 2023 by Zoom

Present Commissioners: Teresa Aravena-Gonzalez, Jillian Dymont, Nicole Jacob, Sherri Oken, Eileen Rooney, Geeticka Upmanyu (until 7:43 p.m.), Benny Wheat

Absent Commissioners: Elizabeth Assenza, Ashley Carter, Jeremy Little, Daniela Nebalek

Liaison Present: Vanesa Westlake (Youth Council)

Call to order 7:04 p.m.

- I. Housekeeping
 - A. This meeting is being recorded
 - B. Welcome to the new commissioners who were recently sworn in
TO DO: Sherri will schedule an Onboarding for the new Commissioners
 - C. Sherri made a motion to approve the March general meeting minutes, Benny seconded and all voted in favor
- II. Updates
 - A. Day of Service
 1. Eileen reached out to Evan Reppert Day of Service who assured us it will happen at sometime in the future.
 2. Usually have the event on MLK Day but this year, we scheduled on different days, both that were not possible due to inclement weather.
 - B. Asian Pacific Heritage Month
 1. Sherri is the sole commissioner working on event so committee is considered an adhoc planning group.
 - a. We don't have official open meeting law requirements which makes us more nimble.
 - b. We are meeting every week except school vacation week.
 2. May 27th in Americal gymnasium
 - a. She reviewed the possible performances and interactive activities.
 - b. This event will be much bigger than last year since we have the space and the funds.
 - c. She has the assistance of a wonderful group of community volunteers, two of whom worked with us on the 2022 event.
 - C. Financial Considerations
 1. She secured a grant from the MA Cultural Council.
 2. Sherri Dalton pays the bills after which we send invoices and request to the MCA for repayment from the grant.
 3. We had \$247 expense for International Women's Day (IWD) that can be repaid to HRC from our grant.
 4. For APAH event, some performers will require payment and we will need some supplies and craft materials.
 5. Lion Dance rehearsals have been done at the expense of parents of Wakefield Lion Dancers.
 6. We won't have APAH expense totals for another week or two but anticipate \$400-\$500 in expenses.
 7. Sherri made a motion that the expenses for IWD will be debited against our grant. Eileen seconded and all voted in favor
 8. Originally, we were told the grant was for \$1500 then received another letter that indicated we will receive \$1880. Sherri to follow up for clarification.
 9. We also have an increased budget from the Town.
 10. Suggestion: Offer Financial support to school groups who to plan some of events connected to WHRC initiatives.
 11. We cannot give money directly to the schools but can pay for a specific event feature.
 12. In all case, we must have invoices.

13. TO DO: Sherri will prepare APAH expense information for the next month for consideration as a grant expense.
14. Space rental for Lion Dance practice
 - a. Mother of Lion Dancer rented space on her own.
 - b. We did offer to reserve the space for them so that they would not incur cost but they didn't take advantage of the offer.
 - c. Suggestion: Help community groups reduce costs when preparing for our events.
- D. Other APAH
 1. We are asking people to come in traditional dress for a heritage fashion show.
 2. Sherri made a request to members of the WHRC, their friends and members of the Youth Council to participate.
 3. Geeticka offered to come wearing Indian dress and may know of students who would like to be involved.
 4. TO DO Sherri and Geeticka will check into the possibility of having a henna artist at the 5.27 event.
- E. Planning of Events and Initiatives
 1. The upside of an adhoc planning committee is that they have more flexibility in meeting.
 2. The downside of having just one Commissioner involved in planning an initiative is that volunteers from the community are wonderful but not as invested as official Commissioners.
- III. HRC June Commemorations
 - A. Juneteenth Flag Raising and Ceremony
 1. Thursday, June 15th
 2. Kate Lipper Garebedian is our guest speaker.
 3. Beverly ROTC will do the Flag raising.
 4. We are approved to raise the flag at the Americal.
 5. The Town has approved the purchase of another flag pole
 6. We are in discussion to finalize the program (poet, a singer, readings)
 - TO DO: Eileen and Nicole to coordinate with Juneteenth Association
 - B. Pride Month Flag Raising
 1. Thursday, June 1st
 2. HRC members to raise the flag with help from the DPW
 3. Vanessa Schukis will sing.
 4. We may have members of the HRC and/or Town Council speak.
 - TO DO: Eileen to coordinate program.
 - C. Town of Reading
 1. June 17th Pride Month Commemoration: Car Parade for Pride Month and Festival
 2. Juneteenth Sat. June 24th
- IV. Our next HRC general meeting
 - A. Eileen, Chair, (nor will Sherri, Vice Chair) will not be at the next meeting
 1. TO DO: Eileen will prepare an agenda and contact Sherri Dalton.
 2. Teresa will run the next meeting.
 - B. We will hold the election for new officers in May.
- V. The Human Rights Commission going forward
 - A. Continuing Commissioners include Sherri, Teresa, Jeremy & Elizabeth.
 - B. Eileen, who is not continuing, would like to be involved in future commemoration planning.
 - C. Benny, whose term has ended, would like to continue helping with fall indigenous peoples programming.
- VI. Matters not anticipated
 - Youth Council would like a member of the HRC to talk about the Commission at its next meeting.
 - We discussed financially supporting one of their activities if consistent with the HRC's mission.

Motion to Adjourn: 8:15 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sherri Oken