

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Kristina Testa-Buzzee, Chair; Ivonne Zucco, Co-Vice Chair
Sarah Rendon Garcia, Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco, Co-Vice Chair;
Sharon Baanante, Joy DeJaegar, Emma Dignoti, Jasmine Prezzie

OTHERS: Michelle Woods Matthews

CALL TO ORDER

**** MS. PREZZIE MOVED TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER.**

**** MS. ZUCCO SECONDED.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. October 21, 2024

**** MS. DEJAEGAR MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 21, 2024 MEETING.**

**** MS. GRACIA SECONDED.**

The following corrections were noted:

Page 4, second to last paragraph, please change “civil engagement” to “civic engagement”.

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 21, 2024 MINUTES AS AMENDED
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one from the public in attendance.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Testa-Buzzee said that she had sent out the Committee assignments. She then gave a brief overview of those who had submitted Committee interests. She said that they would adjourn on the earlier side to allow the Committees to meet.

The discussion moved to where Youth Participation in Sports would fall within the two Committees along with the issues involved with the Menstrual Equity Law.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee asked who would like to be on the Community Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee and who would like to be on the Policy and Advocacy Committee.

It was decided that Ms. O'Toole-Giandurco, Ms. Garcia, Ms. DeJaegar, and Ms. Prezzie would be on the Community Outreach and Engagement Committee.

The Policy and Advocacy Committee would be comprised of Ms. Testa-Buzzee, Ms. Baanante, Ms. Zucco and Ms. Dignoti.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee said that the group had reached consensus that Youth Sports and Women's Projects would fall under Community Outreach and Engagement. This would also include the issue of the Awards Ceremony. Last year, the Commission awarded an adult and a youth for their commitment to the mission of the Commission. The rubric might need to be slightly refined. She then gave a brief overview of the process. The discussion moved to whether they needed to specify a specific gender for the award.

Ms. DeJaegar asked for some clarification on the goal of the award and what the criteria would be. Ms. Testa-Buzzee replied that the work that the individuals performed served the mission of the Commission. This could include work that supported marginalized populations, gender equity or the manner in which they live their lives in the community. The materials for the award give more details.

Ms. Zucco noted that International Women's Day falls on the 8th, which is a Saturday this year. Ms. Testa-Buzzee said that she would like to see it done a bit later in March because they promote it in the schools. Discussion followed about the date for the award.

It was noted that there had been two months where the second Monday of the month had been holidays. This was the reason that the meetings were moved to the third Monday of the month. Ms. Zucco asked Ms. Garcia if she would be interested in reviewing the language of the rubric.

The discussion then moved to the ways that the Commission might be able to protect and position themselves to look at Gender Equity or Equality in reference to the changes in the Federal administration or possible as a global topic. Ms. Testa-Buzzee said that the group represents all political persuasions.

Ms. Baanante said they would probably be very busy building a safety net at the State level. If Federal issues come up, the Commission can discuss potential recommendations on various advocacy letters that the Commission will be sending.

Ms. Zucco said that they expect to see a lot of movement in the legislation this year in order to protect the rights that the State already provides to marginalized women and those in the LGBTQ community. She noted that there had been a number of rallies held throughout the State for both the marginalized women and those in the LGBTQ community.

Ms. Zucco said that she had participated in a Hartford press conference about protecting immigrants. She spoke about some of the planning that had been done before the election

regarding immigrants. The group has met with the various legislators and the Attorney General from the Governor's Office about these issues. She listed other recent events that provided support for the community in Stamford. Norwalk will be having a Community Conversation similar to Stamford's meeting. This will entail bringing all the groups in the City together to talk about diversity and how to align to protect their rights.

The legislators wish to hear from their constituents about what kind of legislation would be the most useful to consider. They are also interested in updating documents like the Trust Act or the Family Preparedness Act. There were a number of key supporters at the meeting, so Ms. Zucco felt that the State was in a good place to collaborate with them to move legislation forward that protects the rights of people.

Ms. Baanante asked Ms. Zucco if she would like to join the Policy Committee. Ms. Zucco replied that she would be happy to attend a meeting to help make establish a few connections. Ms. Testa-Buzzee said that she hoped that the Committees would be able to work together to move the work forward.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Testa-Buzzee gave a brief update on the proposed name change of the Commission from Commission on the Status of Women to the Commission on Gender Equity. She said that the original item had been presented to the Ordinance Committee, but the Common Council Member that was the Ordinance Chair had resigned. The item needs to be reintroduced to the Ordinance Committee and Ms. Garcia said that she believes that is the item's current status. She asked for clarification on moving the item forward. Ms. O'Toole-Giandurco said that the Ordinance Committee had just completed the Complete Streets ordinance and felt that the Commissioner should resubmit the item for the Ordinance Committee's consideration. Discussion followed.

There will be no meeting in December.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee said that the Commission members should have received an email from her for the Committee meetings. These meetings should be about 15 minutes.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee said Ms. Zucco would be on Policy Committee now.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee also noted that she works for the State, so she will have to look into whether it would be a conflict of interest for her to be on the Policy Committee. Ms. Garcia noted that she works for UCONN. Ms. Testa-Buzzee said that she will check into that also.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. ZUCCO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. PREZZIE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services