

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN
REGULAR MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
AUGUST 14, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Claudia Werman Connor, Chair; Sharon Baanante; Ashley Gulyas,
Jasmine Prezzie; Sarah Rendon Garcia; Kristina Testa-Buzzee;
Ivonne Zucco

STAFF: Michelle Woods Matthews, City of Norwalk Director of Communications

OTHER: Rhea Henry, City of Norwalk Workforce Development Director;
Jesse Buccolo, Norwalk ACTS Deputy Director

Call to Order

Ms. Conner called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and acknowledged those in attendance as noted above.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Connor noted that the minutes were done very well, very thorough and comprehensive, and the only correction was that her name should be Connor not Conner throughout.

** MS. BAANANTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING
OF JUNE 12, 2023 AS CORRECTED WITH CHANGE NOTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Public Comment - none

New Business

Norwalk ACTS Presentation

Ms. Woods introduced Rhea Henry, Workforce Development Director and Jesse Buccolo from Norwalk ACTS and gave an overview of their backgrounds. They shared charts of their presentation as follows:

Norwalk ACTS is a Collective Impact partnership mission to bring people together to achieve social change, coordinate systems to work collaboratively.

Research: Charts included post-secondary outcomes, gender data, labor force profiles;
key data is 29% of NPS students do not enroll in college.

CT skills training programs, wrap-around services, financial support, job placement,
infrastructure strategies, employee relations

Norwalk ACS Accomplishments: Communications, Infrastructure, Coordination Services

Projects: Norwalk Job Board, Workforce Development Referral Resource Guide;

Career Events, Career & Training Expo, Youth Employment program High School graduates
Partnership with Norwalk Community College, Fairfield County Community Foundation,
Department of Social Services ALICE data for United Way

Questions and comments were fielded and there was discussion on challenges and
collaboration opportunities with Norwalk Public Schools. Ms. Henry outlined programs
focused on employer engagement and resources available require coordination and strong
marketing to reach populations in need.

There was discussion on America Job Centers located in Bridgeport and Stamford that limit
Norwalk collaboration. Mr. Buccolo spoke on plans to build infrastructure strategies working
closely with Career Navigator and Norwalk Public Schools. There was further discussion on
how to access the Norwalk ACTS data and match up with the Commission's surveys to
prioritize with Community engagement and develop programs to empower young people to
run for local office and become involved with community services.

Ms. Connor thanked Ms. Henry and Mr. Buccolo for their important work and looks forward
to ways to collaborate with Norwalk ACTS.

- Documentary: "Take the Ice" – No report – will be on the agenda for next month.
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- Update on meeting with Recreation and Parks on their Master Plan

Ms. Baanante reported that the City's 10 Year Master Plan is slated for approval, and it is a
very comprehensive document that incorporated research from focus groups and community
stakeholders. There is an opportunity to tap into the data that has been compiled and
incorporate a gender analysis into their sports plan to ensure girls have same opportunity as
boys. She and Michelle met Mr. Stowers and he is very open to providing this data, and next
month he will share reports with the Commission on Recreation and Parks usage

Ms. Connor suggested that the plan be sent to the Commissioners so that members can formulate questions, or maybe provide an executive summary as the document is quite lengthy.

- Form a subcommittee to put together a recommendation for a potential annual Norwalk Awards ceremony for 2024

Ms. Connor asked for interested members to meet with her and Michelle to discuss how to best plan in conjunction with International Women's Day in March. Ms. Gulyas agreed to meet to discuss.

Send Claudia Connor your phone number via email - Ms. Connor asked the members to submit their contact information to by email so that there is an up-to-date list of members.

V. Old Business

- Community Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee

Ms. Gulyas reported on the Night Out program is tomorrow at the Police Station from 5-8. She and Irene are the only members signed up to attend, and they could use another person. Ms. Prezzie explained that it is an informal set up with tables along the sidewalks.

- Reporting on Farmers Market Tabling

Ms. Gulyas showed a summary of survey results from Pride in the Park and Farmers Market and provided highlights of key data

Breakdown of issues of Pay Equity, Violence Against Women, Gender Identification, GBTQ, Reproductive Rights, Childcare

- Upcoming table surveys

There was discussion of participation in a South Norwalk farmers market as a way to reach another segment of the community.

Ms. Connor suggested a table at the SoNo 5K on October 1 as another opportunity to reach the community. Ms. Woods will reach out to the coordinator to investigate participation.

- Norwalk Public Library partnership –Two Gen Readings –Multigenerational Book Club

Ms. Gulyas reported it was a small but engaged event, and she plans to do another collaboration with the Norwalk Librarian. There was discussion on how to partner with Norwalk Public Schools in March for the book events such as Read Across America or other Book giveaways. Ms. Baanante offered to look into collaboration opportunities.

- New organizations that may want to partner with the Commission. Ms. Zucco reported the sub-committee is working on collaborating with events, and she will have more information next month after their meeting.
- T-shirts - Ms. Connor reported that the new logo has been approved, but the multi colors may be expensive to print on the shirts. Ms. Woods noted that Minuteman Press may be most affordable and she will look into costs and send a link of the design..

- Diversification of Boards of Commissions Committee

Ms. Baanante reported there is an opening on the Board of Estimate and Taxation. She outlined this Board serves as the City's fiscal authority and budget-setting body. The Board consists of six appointed members, to overlapping four-year terms, and there is currently only one woman on the Board.

Ms. Connor noted that there are currently two vacancies on the Commission for Independent Party affiliation or Republican.

New Business

Ms. Baanante asked about a Bill that will provide a program to have feminine products available at the Middle Schools. There was discussion on reaching out to Facilities. Ms. Testa-Buzzee suggested that there should be an effort to reach out to Public Relations or Communications, not just to Facilities to notify parents of the program. Ms. Baarante offered to reach out to Sandra Faioes, NPS Operations.

There was discussion on the issue of changing the name of the Commission to be more in line with the purview and mission. It was noted that this will be added to a future agenda.

- Robert Stowers, Director of Recreation and Parks – Ms. Connor noted that this is on the agenda for the September meeting to talk about equity and Recreation and Parks.

Ms. Connor thanked the Commissioners for all their hard work and noted the next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MS. ZUCCO MOVED TO ADJOURN.
- ** MS. PREZZIE SECONDED THE MOTION.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Knox

Telesco Secretarial Services

City Of Norwalk

Commission on Status of Women

August 14, 2023

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