

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
MONDAY, JULY 8, 2024
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Kristina Testa-Buzzee; Chair, Ivonne Zucco; Co-Chair, Sharon Baanante, Jasmine Prezzie, Claudia Conner, Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco.

STAFF: Michelle Woods-Matthews

OTHER: Crush 8U Black Softball Team 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mz. Testa-Buzzee called the meeting to order at 7:06.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. May 13, 2024

**** MS. ZUCCO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

**** MS. CONNER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS AMENDED.**

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Lauricella was present for public comments.

Ms. Lauricella discussed a letter sent to the commission. she stated she had received no meaningful response.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. Congratulating the Norwalk Crush 8U Girls softball team for winning the Babe Ruth State Championship. This is the first win of a state championship for a Norwalk youth travel softball program in its history.

Ms. O'Toole-Giandurco said she appreciated the commission taking the time to honor the team after their recent win. She stated the win brought pride to the city of Norwalk.

**** MS. TESTA-BUZZEE MOVED TO RECOGNIZE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE 8U TEAM AND COACH**

**** MS. CONNER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. Michelle Woods Matthews to give update on the City hiring a DEI Officer.

Ms. Woods-Matthew stated they prepared the job description to share with the commission. Ms. Baanante asked who the DEI officer would answer to. Ms. Woods-Matthews stated they were still hashing out the details. Ms. Baanante felt that the issues with the old DEI officer must be addressed before hiring the new DEI officer. There was a discussion about which commissions involved in the hiring process had received the information.

Ms. Prezzie asked for an explanation as to why the school DEI officer was being merged with the city. Ms. Woods-Matthews described what led up to the current decision. Ms. Testa-Buzzee noted the commission was there to lend their support to the process.

c. Discussion on how the Commission's committees are structured and if we need to make any changes. Current committees include: the Community Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee, the Diversification of Boards and Commissions Committee and the Agenda Committee.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee stated they would be discussing how committees are structured and give some thought to making changes. She also noted they would be discussing elements from item e because they are Ms. Testa-Buzzee stated they would be discussing how committees are structured and give some thought to making changes. She also noted they would be discussing elements from item e because they are part of the same conversation. She referenced the September 9th meeting where they would be working together in person at a public meeting. Ms. Testa-Buzzee stated the meeting would discuss priorities and goals for the upcoming year. She stated they would be preparing a survey to gather information ahead of the meeting. She said they would be looking at the current committee structures.

Ms. Testa Buzzee proceeded to talk about the three cited committees and their respective chairs.

Ms. Zucco gave a brief report describing the specific goals of the Community Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee. She described various events over the summer of 2023 but remarked the group has slowed down for lack of initiatives they were actively working on. She stated that there should be a conversation as a whole commission to determine if the group should continue or take on a different form.

Ms. Baanante went on to say they laid out what they wanted to accomplish. She stated they accomplished roughly eight out of ten items. She agreed that they should wait till the September meeting to see how the new leadership would like to proceed.

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Ms. Conner added that community outreach and civil engagement would always be a part of how they operate. She also agreed they are in a bit of a lull. Ms. Conner said it was a good idea to rethink priorities and determine where to go from there. She also noted that committee membership was overlapping, there were attendance issues and these items should be addressed at the September meeting. e part of the same conversation. She referenced the September 9th meeting where they would be working together in person at a public meeting. Ms. Testa-Buzzee stated the meeting would discuss priorities and goals for the upcoming year. She stated they would be preparing a survey to gather information ahead of the meeting. She said they would be looking at the current committee structures.

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d. Review bylaws and discuss potentially adding a provision that includes a reference to attendance.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee noted inconsistencies in the bylaws and the lack of reference to attendance. She described the attendance requirements she wished to have included. She stated it was a standard clause for board bylaws. She also pointed out the bylaws do not reflect the current meeting days so they had to be amended.

**** MS. BAANANTE MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS TO REFLECT THAT MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE SECOND MONDAY OF THE MONTH.**

**** MS. ZUCCO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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There was a discussion about what the attendance requirements would be. Ms. Zucco also noted there should be a decision made on how many times they would meet and how many meetings could be missed. Ms. Prezzie wanted to see the wording other boards and commissions use. She described various gray areas and wondered if the mandate increases for those who attend more than one committee meeting in a month.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee said she would look up sample clauses. She also suggested it was an item they could move to September.

Ms. Baanante proposed the use of an email address for public access.

e. At the September 9th meeting, the Commission will be identifying 2024-2025 priorities.

- Kristina Testa-Buzzee will create and send a survey for Commissioners to fill out ahead of the September meeting to discuss potential priorities items for the Commission.

f. There are two vacancies on the Commission.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee indicated there were two vacancies on the commission and they wanted a full committee by September. She asked the member to provide suggestions. She added the positions were also open to the public and applications could be found online. Ms. Testa-Buzzee stated she was looking for a motion to review the laws and make recommendations to the city for bylaw amendments.

g. Next steps for the proposed name change of the Commission on the Status of Women.

- Kristina Testa-Buzzee is happy to speak at an upcoming Ordinance Committee where the Commission is approved to be on the agenda to Present.

Ms. Woods-Matthews indicated they needed someone from the commission to be put on the Ordinance Committee Agenda who would work with Brian Candela. Ms. Testa-Buzzee took on the role and listed some materials she would draw from in her presentation. Ms. Conner offered to forward the letter with her talking points.

V. OLD BUSINESS

a. Community Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee

Ms. Zucco had no further updates.

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Ms. Testa-Buzzee mentioned she represented the commission at the Civic Engagement Program.

b. Diversification of Boards and Commissions Committee

- Monthly Board and Commission vacancy announcement reminder

Ms. Woods-Matthews mentioned they had a new supervisor at recreation and sports who wanted to work with the commission to further youth sports among girls. Ms. Testa-Buzzee indicated the executive committee was on board with him coming to the next meeting to do an overview of his plans, and thoughts. Ms. Baanante requested he provide data.

Ms. Conner wanted to know if they were meeting in August.

**** MS CONNER MOVED TO CANCEL THE AUGUST 2024 MEETING.**

**** MS. ZUCCO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**** MS. PREZZIE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

**** MS. BAANANTE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting ended at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services