

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 13, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Claudia Connor, Chair; Sharon Baanante, Kristina Testa-Buzzee, Jessica Edward, Sarah Rendon Garcia, Jasmine Prezzie, Ivonne Zucco.

OTHERS: Michelle Woods Matthews, Communications Director

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Connor called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

• April 8, 2024

**** COMMISSIONER BAANANTE MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 8, 2024 MEETING.**

**** COMMISSIONER EDWARDS SECONDED.**

The following corrections were noted:

Page 1, under **ATTENDANCE** and forward: please change all forms of “Conner” or “Connors” to the correct spelling of “Connor”

Page 2, paragraph 2, line 1: please change the following from:

“Ms. Baanante wanted to know how the association would be handled.”

To: “Ms. Baanante wanted to know how the funding would be handled.”

Page 3, under **OLD BUSINESS**, paragraph 1 and forward: please change all forms of “Zocco” and “Zuucco” to the correct spelling of “Zucco”.

Page 4, paragraph 2 and 3, please move the following corrected text:

Ms. Baanante discussed the idea of the Commission asking for a budget to cover the work they do. Ms. Connor suggested getting to discuss what would be needed for tabling and coming up with a potential budget. Ms. Woods Matthews outlined the likely process involved in acquiring a working budget.

Under old business, Ms. Baanante remarked they had three projects to finish up from their original proposal. They are as follows:

- Onboarding and dock to be piloted with the next new member.
- Having the city compile the yearly data on gender and race on boards and commissions
- Establishing DEI training for the commissions and the boards

to the Section titled “Diversification of Boards and Commissions Committee”.

**** COMMISSIONER ZUCCO MOVED TO AMEND THE APRIL 8, 2024 AS CORRECTED.**

**** COMMISSIONER BAANANTE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 8, 2024 MEETING AS AMENDED PASSED WITH TO WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (BAANANTE, CONNOR, EDWARDS, AND ZUCCO) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (TESTA BUZZE).**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one who wished to comment at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Update on Name Change.**

Commissioner Connor reminded everyone about the previous discussion about process outlines in Chapter 115 for changing the name of the Commission from “Commission on Status of Women” to “Commission on Gender Equity”.

Commissioner Connor thanked everyone for their input and stated that the updated version of the document had been send to Ms. Woods Matthews during the previous week. The next Ordinance Committee meeting will be held in the near future. Ms. Woods Matthew asked if the Commissioners needed to vote on the track changes. Discussion followed.

The track changes were displayed on screen. Commissioner Connor highlighted some of the key changes, such as the change of the word “Equality” to “Equity”.

**** COMMISSIONER ZUCCO MOVED TO APPROVE THE CHANGES IN CHAPTER 115 AND FOR IT TO BE PRESENTED TO THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE IN ORDER TO ADVOCATE FOR THE NAME CHANGE OF THE COMMITTEE.**

**** COMMISSIONER RENDON GARCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Connor said that she believed the next meeting was scheduled for the 21st and asked Ms. Woods Matthews to check about having a Commissioner at that meeting. Ms. Woods Matthews said that she would forward the updated document to the Ordinance Committee later in the evening.

• **Vote for new Chair and Vice Chair**

Commissioner Connor opened the floor for nominations for Committee Chair.

Commissioner Zucco nominated Commissioner Testa Buzzee as Commission Chair. There were no other nominations from the floor.

**** COMMISSIONER BAANANTE MOVED TO NOMINATE KRISTINA TESTA BUZZE AS COMMISSION CHAIR.**

**** COMMISSIONER ZUCCO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE KRISTINA TESTA BUZZE AS COMMISSION CHAIR PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (BAANANTE, CONNOR, EDWARDS, GARCIA, PREZZIE AND ZUCCO) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (TESTA BUZZEE).**

Commissioner Baanante congratulated Commissioner Testa Buzzee and thanked Commissioner Connor for all of the work that she had done and the time that she had invested in the Commission. Commissioner Testa Buzzee agreed. Commissioner Connor said that she felt it was amazing that Norwalk had this Commission and this was an extraordinary group.

Commissioner Connor opened the floor for nominations for Committee Vice Chair.

Commissioner Testa Buzzee asked if it was possible to have a co-vice chair. She said that she would like to nominate both Commissioner Zucco and Commissioner O'Toole-Giandurco as co-Vice Chairs.

There were no additional nominations from the floor.

**** COMMISSIONER RENDON GARCIA MOVED TO NOMINATE IVONNE ZUCCO AND SHANNON O'TOOLE-GIANDURCO AS CO-VICE CHAIRS.**

**** COMMISSIONER EDWARDS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE IVONNE ZUCCO AND SHANNON O'TOOLE-GIANDURCO AS CO-VICE CHAIRS PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (BAANANTE, CONNOR, EDWARDS, GARCIA, PREZZIE AND TESTA BUZZE) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (ZUCCO).**

Commissioner Connor thanked everyone for their willingness to serve and suggested an in person celebration.

• **Community Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee**

Commissioner Testa Buzzee said that she had recently come across a United Way Leadership Program called "Impact". She said that she had not heard of this before but the Commissioners might want to consider changing the similar name of the award that they have.

- **Diversification of Boards and Commissions Committee.**

Commissioner Baanante said the Committee would like to meet with Commissioner Testa Buzzee and Ms. Woods Matthews to discuss the potential direction for the Committee in the future. There were three items still on the list from two years ago. These remaining items need to be wrapped up and then a new direction needs to be determined.

- **Upcoming Local Events**

Ms. Woods Matthews said that the Mayor's Ball was scheduled for May 18th and will benefit Person to Person and the Norwalk Housing Foundation. Tickets are still available and interested parties should contact Ms. Woods Matthews.

The 10th Annual Pride in the Park event is scheduled for June 8th from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Veterans Park. This is organized by the Triangle Community Center.

Common Council Member Melissa Murray is setting up a Women's Sports Expo meeting, which she had previously mentioned to the Commission. This hybrid meeting will be held on May 20th at noon in City Hall. Council Member Murray sent out emails to the Commission members.

Commissioner Testa Buzzee had several questions about the Committee. Ms. Woods Matthews said that this was a planning meeting about sports in the community. It will be held in the Public Works Conference Room on the second floor of City Hall. This meeting will be basically focused on forming a committee. Discussion followed about the details. Commissioner Edwards said that she would be able to attend in person and will send the notes to Commissioner Testa Buzzee.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Community Outreach and Civic Engagement Committee**

Commissioner Connor said that after reviewing the survey results in the April minutes, she suggested a meeting to develop some recommendations to present to the Commission on how to move forward and identifying the community priorities. Commissioner Connor said that she would email the Committee members.

- **Diversification of Boards and Commissions Committee.**

Commissioner Baanante said there was no additional business to discuss at this time.

Commissioner Connor asked if there was an update on the vacant positions. Commissioner Baanante said that the Commission needed to fill the two open positions and suggested looking

at the LGBTQ+ community or possibly adding a male or younger student. She said that she would work on this but was also open to any potential candidates for the vacancies.

Ms. Woods Matthews said that the Commissioners could send any potential candidate suggestions to her, Ms. Dixon or Mayor Rilling. There is one Democratic seat open and the other can be an unaffiliated, independent or Republican candidate. She added that she did not believe that there was an age requirement.

Commissioner Connor said that she would contact the Center for Global Studies and also the Triangle Community Center for potential candidates. She suggested that any potential candidates also be sent to Commissioner Testa Buzzee.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER PREZZIE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COMMISSIONER BAANANTE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services