



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Community Relations Committee

Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Chairman
Kevin J. Dombrowski

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, August 17, 2022

6:30 PM

Council Chambers Town Hall Annex
Building - Hybrid Format

Remote Meeting Participation information will be provided on the Granicus/Legistar Meeting Portal

In -Person Council Chambers

Join Zoom Meeting from your Computer, Smart Phone or Tablet:

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82356882498?pwd=Q2JpVFhcnlhaVpUbDJycWdyRHlvdz09> -
- Or by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; +Meeting ID: 823 5688 2498; Passcode:
468837**

I CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Paul at 6:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Paul welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. He stated for the Town Council Community Relations Committee and members of the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website - Granicus-Insite Meeting Portal.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Bill Saums
Gary Paul

Excused: John Marshall

In addition, the following were present:

John Rich Police Chief
Nicole Cruz-Glacken Resident
Ann Holland Resident
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. CITIZENS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Review and discuss the National League of Cities “Responding to Racial Tension in your Municipality”

<<https://www.nlc.org/resource/responding-to-racial-tension-in-your-city-a-municipal-action-guide/>>

Councilor Paul noted Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) distributed to its member towns a “National League of Cities” Action Guide, as part of their Communities Advancing Racial Equity (CARES) Program. He asked whether the Community Relations Committee would like to add this Guide to their next agenda for further review and discussion.

Councilor Saums stated that he has attended a few workshops sponsored by various groups regarding *Racial Equity Programs*. He stated that he would be interested in looking at the information the National League of Cities “*Responding to Racial Tension in your Municipality*” has provided.

The Committee agreed to add the National League of Cities (NLC) “*Responding to Racial Tension in your Municipality*” their September 21, 2022 Agenda for discussion.

The Full National League of Cities “*Responding to Racial Tension in your Municipality*” Guide was available at:

<<https://www.nlc.org/resource/responding-to-racial-tension-in-your-city-a-municipal-action-guide/>>

RESULT: CONTINUE

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Community Relations Committee Regular Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2022.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Paul

VOTE: 2- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Bill Saums

SECONDER: Gary Paul

AYE: 2 Saums and Paul

EXCUSED: 1 Marshall

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion regarding Black History Month and update on the 2023 Black History Activity/Contest.

Councilor Paul stated he would like the Committee to start working on preparations for next year's February, 2023 Black History Month Activity. He noted last year's (2022) program was the first Black History Activity the Community Relations Committee held and he commented that although they got off to a late start with rolling out the program that it was a success thanks to all the work Councilor Rodriguez did to get the project off the ground.

Councilor Saums noted that Councilor Rodriguez was interested in applying for Grant Funding to further support the Black History Month Program.

Ms. Nicole Cruz-Glacken, 5 Allyn Lane, Ledyard, suggested in the "Chat Box" that the town raise the Pan African Flag in front of Town Hall and have speakers during Black History Month.

RESULT: CONTINUE

2. Continued discussion and possible action to develop a "Community Relations Commission Mission Statement".

Councilor Paul presented the following draft Mission Statement for the Community Relations Committee to review in preparation for discussion at their September 21, 2022 meeting:

"The Community Relations committee is tasked with being both an advocate and a resource for the community by listening, communicating and engaging with our community, standing up to discrimination and racism of all forms by encouraging dialogue and promoting unity and understanding, learning from one another as we continue to build a strong community together, making sure no-one is ever left behind."

RESULT: CONTINUE

3. Continued discussion and possible action draft a schedule for Public Information Forums to present to residents the types of services the town offers; how to access services and the authority residents should direct concerns regarding services.

Councilor Paul stated the Community Relations Committee was currently scheduled to host a Booth at the August 31, 2022 Farmers' Market to provide information regarding Mental Health services along with a number of other services that are

available to the public. He stated the Community Relations Committee would discuss preparations for the August 31, 2022 Booth in more detail later this evening (Old Business Item #6).

Councilor Paul went on to note that he spoke with Public Works Director Steve Masalin about scheduling a time to present information regarding the services the Public Works Department provides to the town. He noted the importance to get information out to residents pertaining to things such parking regulations during snow events as well as mailboxes.

RESULT: CONTINUE

4. Continued discussion and possible action to identify various town venues to host “Informal Conversations in the Park” to engage residents in discussions regarding their concerns and their ideas for potential solutions.

The Community Relations Committee discussed the following potential venues to engage residents about issues that are of concern to the Community.

- * Nathan Lester House
- * Up-Down Sawmill - The mill operated in the fall and would be a good opportunity to talk with residents after the Sawmill demonstration.

Councilor Saums commented on the good participation the Community Relations Committee received at the July 20, 2022 Informal Conversation with residents at the Park on East Drive. He stated that he believed the good turnout was because they had a topic for the discussion, noting that residents previously brought concerns regarding safety issues at the Park to the town’s attention. He also noted that letters were sent to the residents in the area of Park; and that the letters were followed-up with a mailing of flyers the week before the event.

Councilor Saums suggested in working to plan/schedule future Informal Conversations to engage residents that they identify the subject matter that would be the topic of conversation.

RESULT: CONTINUE

5. Continued discussion regarding the possibility to schedule joint meetings with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation to discuss items of mutual interest.

Councilor Saums stated he and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal (MPTN) Council Member Crystal Whipple have been communicating in an effort to identify potential dates for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council and Town Council Community Relations Committee to get together. He stated Thursday, September 8, 2022 has been proposed and he questioned whether this date would work for the Community Relations Committee. Councilor Paul stated that he believed that September 8, 2022 would be a good date.

Councilor Saums stated Ms. Whipple would be sending an Invite to the Town Council for a “*Meet and Greet*” at the MTPN Community Center. He suggested during their Informal Gathering that it would be nice to share a meal; and he suggested the Community Relations Committee bring grinders.

**** POST MEETING NOTE 8/18/2022:**** Freedom of Information Act Tom Hennick regarding the posting of an Informal Social Gathering:

“From: Hennick, Thomas A <Thomas.Hennick@ct.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2022 5:06 PM
To: Roxanne Maher <council@ledyardct.org>
Subject: RE: Town of Ledyard - Meeting Portal - Social Gathering Invite

Hello Roxanne,

Hope you are doing well.

I would suggest that while the *notes and questions council members type onto their copies of the online agendas would clearly be “public records”* under the definition in state statutes, *they also would likely be records that would not have to be released because they are personal notes, which can be withheld (see exemption below) under FOI.*

(b) Nothing in the Freedom of Information Act shall be construed to require disclosure of:

(1) Preliminary drafts or notes provided the public agency has determined that the public interest in withholding such documents clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure;

As for the second issue, *I don’t believe that council members attending an event sponsored by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council would be a meeting that needed to be noticed unless the council members sat down and conducted official council business.* It doesn’t sound like that’s the case.

Feel free to follow up if needed.

Tom

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From: Roxanne Maher <council@ledyardct.org>
<<mailto:council@ledyardct.org>>>
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2022 12:50 PM
To: Hennick, Thomas A <Thomas.Hennick@ct.gov>
<<mailto:Thomas.Hennick@ct.gov>>>

Cc: Kristen Chapman <mayoral.asst@ledyardct.org>
<<mailto:mayoral.asst@ledyardct.org>>; Roxanne Maher
<council@ledyardct.org> <<mailto:council@ledyardct.org>>; Fred
Allyn, III <mayor@ledyardct.org> <<mailto:mayor@ledyardct.org>>>
Subject: Town of Ledyard - Meeting Portal - Social Gathering Invite

Good Afternoon Mr. Hennick:

I hope you are doing well and that you were enjoying the summer.

I am looking for guidance regarding the following two items:

- (1) Ledyard has transitioned to a new on-line meeting portal that allows Town Council Members and other Committee Members to review the on-line Agendas and to type a note or highlight text on attachments to remind themselves of questions they may like to ask during the Meeting. They would also be able to type the response to their question in the same place. These "Notes" would only be available to that person (Using their log-in & password).

The Question is whether these notes would be subject to a Freedom of Information Act Request (FOI).

Or would their notes be considered nothing more than if the person jotted down a note on a "sticky" or on their paper Agenda (if we were still using paper) and then throwing the note away after the meeting.

- (2) This is a somewhat of a repeat question. A few months ago, I asked you about the Town Council's Subcommittees hosting "Informal Conversation" at various venues (such as parks or the Town's historic properties) to provide residents an opportunity to discuss any issues that were of concern to them. At that time you advised that the **Informal Gathering** would not need to be posted as a Meeting as long as they were not making any decisions.

The Question: Would the same apply, If the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council invited members of the Town Council or members of a subcommittee to an **Informal Gathering** at MPTN Community Center as a "Meet & Greet" more as a social event.

And if during their casual conversations with each other some ideas were exchanged regarding some areas they may want to consider working on jointly, would the town be required to post this as a meeting.

As always, I appreciate you taking the time to review our questions, and look forward to receiving your response/guidance.

Thank you,
Roxanne
Roxanne M. Maher
Administrative Assistant to
the Ledyard Town Council
(860) 464-3203

council@ledyardct.org <<mailto:council@ledyardct.org>>”

RESULT: CONTINUE

6. Continued discussion to present information to bring awareness to October being “Depression and Mental Health Month”.

Councilor Paul stated in preparation for the Community Relations Committee’s Booth at the August 31, 2022 Farmers’ Market, focusing on Mental Health Awareness and the many other services that are available to those who qualify, that he met with the Mayor’s Executive Assistant/Social Services Coordinator Kristin Chapman, Youth Services Coordinator Kate Sikorsky-Maynard, and Ledyard Visiting Nurse Director/Municipal Agent Karen Goetchuis. He stated he was amazed with the many local and regional services and programs that were available. He also noted that Councilor Rodriguez contacted *Brian Dage Foundation - Brian’s Healing Hearts* - Family Suicide Prevention Group located at 461 Main Street in Niantic. He stated information regarding these Organizations and how to obtain services would be available at the August 31, 2022 Farmers’ Market. He stated that he has also gathered literature that would be available for folks to pick-up at the Community Relations Committee Booth.

Councilor Paul went on to state during the winter months when it gets darker earlier there tends to be more isolation with the shorter daylight hours and colder weather. He stated whether it was kids or adults that were suffering from mental health (depression, anxiety, suicide, etc.) that the person, or their parent/caretaker, may not know where they could get help.

Councilor Paul continued by noting that depression could also be exasperated because individuals may also find that they were having financial difficulty keeping up with expenses to provide for their family due to inflation, etc. Therefore, he addressed the importance for residents to know that there were programs to help such as:

- ✓ Mental Health Resources
- ✓ Brian’s Healing Heart Suicide Prevention
- ✓ Youth & Family Counseling Services -
- ✓ Ledyard Visiting Nurses - Home Health Care
- ✓ Home Heating Fuel Assistance
- ✓ Utilities - Electric & Water Assistance
- ✓ Meal Delivery for Home Bound Individuals
- ✓ Renters Rebate Program

- ✓ No Interest Home Improvement Loans
- ✓ Linda C. Davis Food Pantry
- ✓ United Way of Southeastern Connecticut located in Gales Ferry
- ✓ Special Needs Family Registry
- ✓ Blue Envelope & Green Envelope Program for drivers with special needs

Councilor Paul stated some people just do not know about the assistance programs that were available; or some people may be too proud to ask for help. Therefore, he stated that they need to make sure they were all doing their part to get information out to the residents and to make people aware of the confidential application process. He stated Ledyard does a great job in working to help their residents in-need.

Chief Rich stated that the Police Department would be at the August 31, 2021 Farmers Market to offer support the Community Relations Committee booth and to publicize the Programs that they offer to help support mental health issues and those in the community that have special needs, such as the Special Needs Family Registry and the Blue Envelope and Green Envelope Program for drivers with special needs. He continued to state that he has been working with the Groton Town Police Department, Waterford Police Department and Southern Connecticut State University Center for Excellence in Autism Spectrum Disorders to provide a *Mock Traffic Stop Program* that would be directed toward individuals with Autism. He stated the *Mock Traffic Stop Presentation* would be held on October 1, 2022 at Fitch High School to help those in the autism spectrum see what a traffic stop looked like and for police officers to learn what communication may look like with someone on the spectrum, and learn strategies to effectively communicate. He stated the Presentation would also raise awareness of how the various stimuli that were involved with the police vehicle and the situation of a traffic stop could play into the interactions between driver and the police officer He stated since the Police Department announced the October 1, 2022 *Mock Traffic Stop Presentation* on their Social Media Site that several families with individuals on the Autism Spectrum were interested in attending and they have contacted the Police Department to discuss the program.

RESULT: CONTINUE

7. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee
None.

VII NEW BUSINESS

1. Review comments received at the July 20, 2022 Informal Conversation with residents at the Park on East Drive.

Councilor Saums complemented Councilor Paul for his organization of the Informal

Conversation at the Park on East Drive that was held on July 20, 2022. He stated they had a great turn out and a good conversation with the residents, noting at times it was somewhat emotional, but all-in-all he believed everyone felt good about their conversation.

Councilor Paul stated about 15 residents attended the event along with many Town Councilors and Parks & Recreation Director Scott Johnson, Jr. He stated the idea was to discuss important issues regarding safety concerns at the Park. He noted at times the conversation was a bit contentious, but overall, it turned out to be a positive event. He stated what he found interesting was that while the group was standing in a circle that people were raising their voices and that was when the conversation became contentious. However, he stated as they broke up and engaged one-on-one with each other the conversations became more civil. He stated they discussed a number of good ideas to bring back to their respective committees such as the possibility to install surveillance cameras. He stated neighbors were encouraged to continue to talk to each other and to become more involved in the process as well. He stated they learned a lot about the Park and a lot about each other.

Councilor Paul went on to note that the Public Works Department has done a lot of work at the Park on East Drive, however, he stated more work needed to be done. He also stated that he appreciated Parks & Recreation Director Scott Johnson, Jr. attending the event and for letting the residents know that he was available should they have questions or concerns. Councilor Paul stated he appreciated Mr. Johnson's input, noting that Parks & Recreation would be holding their September 20, 2022 meeting at the Park.

The Community Relations Committee briefly discussed the suggestion to install surveillance cameras at the Park on East Drive relative to legal issues, requirements to monitor the cameras, and options such as posting signs to alert the public that surveillance cameras were in-use.

RESULT: CONTINUE

2. Review and discuss National Faith and Blue Weekend - Tool Kit

Councilor Saums complemented Councilor Paul for his organization of the Informal Conversation at the Park on East Drive that was held on July 20, 2022. He stated they had a great turn out and a good conversation with the residents, noting at times it was somewhat emotional, but all-in-all he believed everyone felt good about their conversation.

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RESULT: CONTINUE

3. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee
None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Saums, moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Paul.
VOTE:0 Approved and so declared. The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Paul
Committee Chairman

Community Relations

Committee

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.