
GoToMeeting | Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
4 So. Eagleville Road, Mansfield, CT

AGENDA

In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC to slow community spread of COVID-19, this meeting is physically closed to the public. The public may listen to the meeting live by calling 1 (872) 240-3212 and using the access code 995-076-269. Additionally, an archive video recording of the meeting will be made available at <https://mansfieldct.gov/video> for 12 months.

Public Comment will be accepted by email at FerraraMT@mansfieldct.org or by USPS mail at Town of Mansfield, Attention: Monica Ferrara, 4 South Eagleville Road, Storrs, CT 06268 and must be received prior to the meeting (public comment received after the meeting will be shared at the next meeting).

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 8, 2020

4. MEMBER REPORTS

5. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Assignment of Roles for Equity Review
- B. Indigenous Peoples Day/Columbus Day

6. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Introduction/Discussion with Mansfield Board of Education Superintendent and Communications Specialist
- B. Town Council Report Review
- C. Election of Officers

7. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

- A. Town Charge
- B. Communications and Outreach

8. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

9. ADJOURNMENT

GoToMeeting | Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
4 So. Eagleville Road, Mansfield, CT

DRAFT MINUTES

In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC to slow community spread of COVID-19, this meeting is physically closed to the public. The public may listen to the meeting live by calling 1 (646) 749-3112 and using the access code 761-142-421. Additionally, an archive video recording of the meeting will be made available at <https://mansfieldct.gov/video> for 12 months.

Public Comment will be accepted by email at FerraraMT@mansfieldct.org or by USPS mail at Town of Mansfield, Attention: Monica Ferrara, 4 South Eagleville Road, Storrs, CT 06268 and must be received prior to the meeting (public comment received after the meeting will be shared at the next meeting).

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mitoma called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Bruder, Daggett, Evans, Fried, Lapuk, Lorenz, Mitoma, Nocton, Vaughan

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 4, 2020

Minutes were approved by consensus.

4. MEMBER REPORTS

Ms. Vaughan reported that she made contact with Superintendent, Kelly Lyman, and that she has a meeting with Ms. Lyman later this week. Ms. Vaughan has also made contact with others at the public schools. Ms. Fried, added that Ms. Lyman was working with Core on public education on racism.

Ms. Evans added a link to the chat for a free webinar that is available for the public to watch. The organization is Project Thrive and the topic is Youth Beyond the Binary - Conversation on Non-Binary Identities. It was live on Monday Nov. 23rd. They also have other free webinars for that are available to watch.

Ms. Nocton reported that she attended a workshop at the Amnesty International Human Rights Conference online. They particularly were looking at policing and race relations. There was also a section on School Resource Officers. Gay

Straight Alliance at EO Smith had a guest speaker this week who was really effective. Democratic Discord students did some work at MMS last year. She is looking for some guest speakers for EO Smith and will report out when more information is available.

Ms. Fried reported she is hoping to set up an online dialogue group through Facebook. Access to this forum can be found through her personal Facebook page.

Ms. Lorenz said that she would like to attend more meetings and webinars to bring more information back to the group.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Heath Equity Solutions: Racism as Public Health Crisis

Commission members briefly discussed asking the Town Council to declare racism as a public health crisis. This will be discussed more at a later date and that it will be possibly combined with the review to be given to the Town Council. Passed on consensus.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Human Rights Day

Ms. Lapuk presented to the Commission the HRC statement for Human Rights Day.

Commission members briefly discussed the presented statement. Ms. Lapuk was charged with adding the HRC email and webpage to the post and to have it sent out to the Town of Mansfield's Communication Specialist to post on the Town of Mansfield media. Motion to send and post was passed on consensus, with the knowledge that some words may be changed.

B. Indigenous People's Day

Commission Members briefly discussed Indigenous People's Day. Members agreed by consensus to recommend that Columbus Day be renamed Indigenous People's Day and that Mr. Mitoma will draft and send out a statement to the Mansfield Board of Education and the Mansfield Town Council.

C. Discussion of Subcommittees

There was a brief discussion to reduce subcommittees to two by combining the Outreach and Communications subcommittees. Motion to combine passed on consensus.

Members of the Town Charge subcommittee include Mr. Mitoma, Ms. Evans, Ms. Bruder, Ms. Nocton, and Ms. Lorenz.

Members of the Communications and Outreach Committee include Mr. Mitoma, Ms. Fried, Ms. Daggett, Ms. Vaughan and Ms. Lapuk.

D. Assignment of Roles for Equity Review

Tabled until next meeting due to the restructuring of the subcommittees.

E. Meeting Schedule for 2021

Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 pm.
Motion passed on consensus.

7. REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Town Charge

Ms. Evans reported on the Emancipation Day Event proposal. Commission members discussed ideas for the Emancipation Day Event. Ms. Evans moved to send the document with the changes discussed to be presented at the January Town Council Meeting. Motion passed on consensus.

B. Outreach

Ms. Vaughan and Ms. Fried reported they were able to contact some people/organizations, but that they were also having some difficulties with receiving responses.

C. Communications

None.

8. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned by consensus at 8:13 pm.

Town Equity Review Draft Plan
Approved by Town Charge Subcommittee, 10/27/20

Ms. Berthelot moved and Mr. Kochenburger seconded that the Mansfield Town Council instruct the Commission on Human Rights to present an **initial set of recommendations to the Town Council for improving equity in the Town of Mansfield** by January 11, 2021. This review shall include proposals for making Juneteenth a town holiday and an **initial review of town ordinances, regulations, policies and practices.**

Objective

- 1) To fulfill request of the Town Council for an initial review and recommendations regarding equity in the Town of Mansfield.
- 2) To familiarize MHRC Members with current state of equity and human rights in Mansfield
- 3) To educate MHRC Members on relevant standards and model practices with regard to promoting human rights at the local level
- 4) To familiarize Town Council, Boards, Commissions, and Employees with the MHRC Mission
- 5) To familiarize Town residents with MHRC Mission

Activities

- 1) Review Literature and Models
- 2) Review Documentation
 - a. Town Ordinances, Regulations, Policies and Practices
 - b. Equity Principles & Standards
 - c. Equity Reports & Evaluations
- 3) Conduct Interviews/Discussion
 - a. Town Council, Boards, Commissions
 - b. Town Employees
 - c. Town Residents (partner with Outreach Committee)
 - d. Business Owners/Employees
 - e. School Communities
- 4) Analyze Findings
- 5) Draft Report

Output

- 1) Report
 - a. Review of relevant standards
 - b. Summary of Findings
 - i. Documentation
 - ii. Interviews
 - c. Recommendations
- 2) Public presentation

Timeline

- 1) Review Literature and Models
- 2) Review Documentation
- 3) Conduct Interviews
- 4) Host Discussions
- 5) Draft Report
- 6) Submit Report
- 7) Host Public Presentation

Resources

Define Equity in Human Rights Terms

Operationalize Human Rights in Town objections

https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/334356/HR-task-report.pdf

Human Rights-based Approach to Programming

https://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/index_62012.html

https://web.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/human-rights-institute/gender_equity_through_human_rights_for_publication.pdf

https://web.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/human-rights-institute/files/iaohra_toolkit_9.11.14_reduced.pdf

https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Bringing_Human_Rights_Home.pdf

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1551230

Key principles

Dignity – Equity – Participation – Community

Planning/Zoning

<https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/zoningaudit.pdf>

https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Planning-for-Equity-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf

https://www.ctoca.org/disparate_impact

DRAFT

To: Mansfield Town Council
From: Mansfield Human Rights Commission
Date:
Re: Indigenous Peoples Day / Columbus Day

Proposal:

The Mansfield Human Rights Commissions recommends the Town redesignate the holiday falling on the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day and that Town Council adopt a resolution acknowledging this change and the reasons behind it (Draft resolution below).

Rationale

Indigenous Peoples Day is a holiday celebrating the past, present, and future of Native communities throughout the United States. First proposed by Indigenous rights activists in 1977, Indigenous Peoples' Day is now recognized by nearly 150 states and municipalities across the country¹. Celebrated on the second Monday in October, Indigenous Peoples' Day is an alternative to the recognition of Columbus Day, which has been criticized for promoting an inaccurate historical narrative and valorizing an individual widely acknowledged to have perpetrated atrocities against Indigenous peoples. Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day instead of Columbus Day is an important opportunity for communities to acknowledge the legacy of colonialism and increase understanding and appreciation for Native people communities.

Indigenous communities are a vital part of the social, political, economic, and cultural fabric of Connecticut and the broader United States. Having continuously inhabited the North American continent for over 15,000 years, with evidence of settlements dating from approximately 8000 BCE in what is today Connecticut,² these communities have a deep history and vital ongoing presence in our diverse world. Today, some 6.8 million people identify as Native American and there are over 600 Native nations within the United States, of which 574 are recognized as sovereign tribal nations. In Connecticut, these include the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, Mohegan Tribe, Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation, Golden Hill Paugusset, and Schaghticoke Tribal Nation. These communities continue to preserve and evolve their rich cultural traditions, develop and share deep ancestral knowledge and understanding of the world, and provide critical insights and innovations as we look toward a more sustainable future. Native individuals are at the forefront of science, arts, politics, business, education, and culture.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_Peoples%27_Day#Indigenous_Peoples'_Day_observers

² Lucianne Lavin, *Connecticut's Indigenous Peoples: What Archaeology, History, and Oral Traditions Teach Us About Their Communities and Cultures* (Yale University Press, 2013), 39.

The vitality of indigenous communities is a testament to their resilience. For over 500 years, the indigenous peoples of the Americas have been subject to policies and practices intended to destroy them. First by European colonial powers, then by settlers, these attacks are well documented in the historic record. In Connecticut, for example, the Treaty of Hartford, which the colonial government imposed to settle the Pequot War in 1638, called for the full eradication of the Pequot people.³ From that time onward, indigenous communities have been systematically exploited, marginalized, and oppressed, to the end that today, Native American individuals experience highest level of poverty and the lowest life expectancy of all racial groups in the US.

Both the achievements and the challenges of Indigenous communities have been largely ignored by the wider American public. There is little accurate representation of the Native American experience in popular culture, which instead is still replete with stereotypic depictions, such as the mascots adopted by some sports teams and schools. A major contributor to this inaccurate erasure of Indigenous peoples is the narrative of the “discovery of America” by Christopher Columbus. The voyages of Columbus, while they made many early modern Europeans aware of Americas for the first time, were neither a ‘discovery’ of an empty “New World” nor the first time Europeans had traveled to the Western Hemisphere (the voyages of Icelandic explorers in the 10th century being well documented). Columbus’ primary achievements were to inaugurate a period of rapacious conquest and exploitation, and his own behavior, which included massacres, enslavement, theft, and brutality, was judged to be egregious even by many of his contemporaries, including the Spanish friar Bartolome de las Casas.

Much of this history has long been ignored, as the popular depictions of Columbus since the late 1700s characterize him as an intrepid and brave explorer. This inappropriate veneration of Columbus was so strong that in the late 1800s, the Italian American community sought to counter the discrimination they faced (including a brutal mass lynching in New Orleans in 1892), by highlighting Columbus’ Italian background. Columbus Day was increasingly recognized throughout the US in the late 1800s and early 1900s, until it was declared a national holiday in 1934. Since that time, the Italian American experience has been one of increasing inclusion, at the same time that the historic assessment of Columbus has diminished. Today, Italian Americans would be far less likely to highlight Columbus as representative of their important contributions to American life.

Recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day, rather than Columbus Day, is an important to acknowledging the history and ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples and can contribute to a more accurate public memory about the legacy of the voyages of Columbus. In doing so, Mansfield would join a growing network of state and local communities taking advantage of an opportunity to celebrate the contribution, heritage, and experiences of Native Americans in all their diversity. Such a recognition would also present an opportunity for reflection on the legacy of colonial dispossession, exploitation, and, indeed, genocide, which Native communities

³ <https://nativenortheastportal.com/annotated-transcription/digcoll2389>

have faced and from which non-Native communities often benefitted. This would be an important step in building a culture of mutual respect in our shared lands.

Draft Resolution

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE SECOND MONDAY OF OCTOBER OF EACH YEAR TO BE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

WHEREAS, Indigenous People of Mansfield, as in all parts of the Americas, have a rich and vibrant living tradition worthy of celebration by all communities of the world;

WHEREAS, Indigenous People of Mansfield, as in all parts of the Americas, have endured centuries of discrimination, exploitation and genocide;

WHEREAS, the Town of Mansfield encompasses the historic homelands of Indigenous Peoples including the Nipmuc, Pequot, and Mohegan Nations;

WHEREAS, the establishment of the Town of Mansfield by non-Native settlers was facilitated by unjust war and expropriation of these Indigenous communities;

WHEREAS, facing and acknowledging our past, good as well as bad, makes our community stronger and more resilient;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MANSFIELD:

1. That the second Monday in October of each year to be Indigenous Peoples' Day.
2. That on the second Monday in October of each year the Town of Mansfield will support events that encourage understanding and appreciation of Indigenous Peoples, their traditions, cultures and our shared history on these ancestral lands.
3. That at all times the Town of Mansfield will seek to encourage all educational institutions within the Town to implement accurate curricula relevant to the traditions, history, and current issues of Indigenous Peoples.
4. That the Town of Mansfield will direct the Town Manager to work with Town departments, the Mansfield Human Rights Commission, the Mansfield Historic Society and other appropriate partners to explore opportunities to commemorate and recognize in our public spaces the historic and current presence of Indigenous Peoples in Mansfield.
5. That, in all of these efforts, the Town of Mansfield will work together in partnership with Native Americans and Indigenous communities.

DRAFT

Report of the Mansfield Human Rights Commission

Date:

Members

Xiomara Bruder
Livia Daggett
Heather Evans
Helen Jane Fried (Vice-Chair)
Karen Lapuk
Virginia Lorenz
Glenn Mitoma (Chair)
Amy Nocton
Barbara Vaughn

Staff

Monica T. Ferrera

Request from the Town Council minutes:

*Ms. Berthelot moved and Mr. Kochenburger seconded that the Mansfield Town Council instruct the Commission on Human Rights to present an **initial set of recommendations to the Town Council for improving equity in the Town of Mansfield** by January 11, 2021. This review shall include proposals for making Juneteenth a town holiday and an **initial review of town ordinances, regulations, policies and practices.***

At the request of the Town Council, the Mansfield Human Rights Commission (MHRC) has initiated a process to provide ongoing recommendations for improving equity within the Town of Mansfield. These efforts form a core element of the broader charge of the MHRC to advance human rights within Mansfield and the wider northeastern Connecticut region. The following report outlines the MHRC plan for addressing the Council's request.

Key Terms

By **EQUITY**, the MHRC means the principle of justice or fairness in our community. Equity takes into account the historic disadvantages individuals and groups have faced in realizing their human rights. The principle requires redressing these disadvantages and seeks to ensure fair outcomes for all members of our community. Doing so may require different approaches for different individuals and groups.

By **EQUALITY**, the MHRC means the principles that every member of our community has equal worth and equal dignity and deserves an equal opportunity to realize their human rights.

By **HUMAN RIGHTS**, the MHRC means those equal and inalienable rights which all human beings possess, regardless of their race, religion, gender identity, age, citizenship status, sexual orientation, disability, language, ethnicity, record of offence, or any other qualifying feature. The Town of Mansfield has an obligation to respect, protect, and ensure fulfillment of the human rights of all members of our community. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most broadly accepted enumeration of human rights, with further elaboration, specification, and extension of this list provided by other key documents recognized at the global, regional, national, state, and local levels.

Current Work and Initial Recommendations

In addressing the Town Council's request, the MHRC identified the following objectives for our activities:

- 1) To fulfill request of the Town Council for an initial review and recommendations regarding equity in the Town of Mansfield.
- 2) To familiarize MHRC Members with current state of equity and human rights in Mansfield
- 3) To educate MHRC Members on relevant standards and model practices with regard to promoting human rights at the local level
- 4) To familiarize Town Council, Boards, Commissions, and Employees with the MHRC Mission
- 5) To familiarize Town residents with MHRC Mission

To achieve these objectives, the MHRC adopted the following workplan:

- 1) Review Literature and Models
- 2) Review Documentation
 - a. Town Ordinances, Regulations, Policies and Practices
 - b. Equity Principles & Standards
 - c. Equity Reports & Evaluations
- 3) Conduct Interviews/Discussion
 - a. Town Council, Boards, Commissions
 - b. Town Employees
 - c. Town Residents (partner with Outreach Committee)
 - d. Business Owners/Employees
 - e. School Communities
- 4) Analyze Findings
- 5) Draft Report

Having consulted the relevant literature and other models, the MHRC has identified the following framework¹ for our initial recommendations and to guide our ongoing work:

Make aspirational commitments to/raising awareness of human rights

While largely symbolic, adopting resolutions or proclamations that acknowledge the role of human rights in advancing equity in Mansfield is an important way of increasing awareness of human rights principles and practices. By articulating these aspirations, the Town can galvanize additional commitments, seed innovative change, and support community efforts to advance justice for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The MHRC recommends the Town endorse the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments (e.g. The Convention on the Rights of the Child) as aspirational standards.**
- **The MHRC recommends the Town develop a plan to raise awareness of human rights, with particular focus on a) Town officials and staff; b) schools; c) law enforcement; and d) general public.**

Reframe Local Concerns as Human Rights Issues

By drawing on human rights principles and frameworks, the Town can effectively address critical local concerns, including economic development, environmental stewardship, and racial equity. Human rights framing attracts additional allies and stakeholders to engage with issues of local concern, and allows officials to draw on the standards and best-practices of the global human rights community. Human rights approaches also ensure that solutions to diverse issues are integrated and mutually supportive of the overarching goal of advancing human dignity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The MHRC recommends that the Town declare Racism a Human Rights crisis, and commit to addressing racism through a human rights lens.**
- **The MHRC recommends that the Town declare Climate Change a Human Rights crisis, and commit to addressing environmental justice through a human rights lens.**

Foster Participatory Governance

Participation in government is both a human right itself and an important mechanism for protecting all human rights. Greater community participation in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs is essential to a thriving democracy. Ensuring broad public engagement promotes more effective governance, and provides for better data collection and feedback on what's working and what's not.

RECOMMENATIONS

- **The MHRC recommends that the Town consider Participatory Budgeting as a component of the annual Town Meeting.**

¹ This framework is adapted from the report *Bringing Human Rights Home: How State and Local Governments Can Use Human Rights to Advance Local Policy* (December, 2012),

- **The MHRC recommends that the Town consider integrating a Civilian Review Board or similar approach in its public safety operations.**

Report on Local Compliance with Human Rights Treaties

International human rights treaties provide important opportunities for benchmarking performance on effective promotion of human rights. While not directly subject to their terms, local jurisdictions can participate in the broader US compliance processes associated with these treaties. By gathering information and compiling reports, the Town can both contribute to the global understanding of US human rights conditions and take advantage of an opportunity to assess our own practices. Currently, the US participates in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention Against Torture, and the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The MHRC recommends that the Town study examples and explore options to participate in reporting processes.**

Conduct Human Rights Based Audits and Impact Assessments

Human rights standards have been adapted and operationalized as benchmarks to understand the potential or actual impacts of local policies or practices. By conducting human rights impact assessments as a part of decisionmaking procedures, and by conducting human rights audits of ongoing programs, the Town can increase accountability and equity. Several municipalities in the United States have developed audit and assessment tools which may be adapted for Mansfield.

RECOMMENDATION

- **The MHRC recommends the Town develop a Human Rights Impact Assessment Tool for use by Town agencies.**
- **The MHRC recommends the Town explore methods for data collections based on human rights audit principles and standards.**

Ongoing work of the MHRC

As part of our ongoing work, the MHRC will continue to identify opportunities to enhance equity and advance human rights in the Town. As part of our work plan, the MHRC is in the process of reviewing existing Town ordinances, regulations, policies and practices, as well as relevant existing equity/human rights standards and reports. In addition, MHRC has begun engaging with Town and community stakeholders to better understand their perspective, concerns, and capacities in the human rights area. The MHRC anticipates continuing these efforts through the first half of 2021, with a goal of producing a final report for the Council in June 2021.