



# PRINCETON HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2022

Zoom Meeting \* Princeton, NJ 08540

## **Board Members – Present**

Rebecca Balaguer  
Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison  
Lina Genovesi, Alt.  
John Heilner  
Ming Kuang  
Loydes Nieves, Alt.  
Veronica Olivares–Weber, Chair

## **Board Members Absent**

Ericka Deglau, Vice Chair  
Khristina Gonzalez  
Larry Spruill

## **Guest Speaker**

Natalie Biello

## **Staff – Present**

Kimberly Figueroa-Martinez

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## **Call to Order:**

The Regular Meeting of the Princeton Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Veronica Olivares–Weber at 6:12 pm. Loydes Nieves recited the announcement: *“We gather today on the land of the Lenni Lenape. As members of the Princeton Human Services Commission, we aspire to show appreciation, respect, and concern for all people and our environment. We honor the Lenape and other Indigenous caretakers of these lands and waters, the elders who lived here before, the Indigenous today, and the generations to come.”* Roll Call was completed.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes: April 20, 2022**

Chair Olivares–Weber addressed the minutes from the April 20, 2022, Princeton Human Services Commission (PHSC) Regular Meeting. After review, no proposed changes were made. John Heilner motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Rebecca Balaguer. All were in favor. Chair Olivares–Weber approved the minutes without opposition.

## **Public Comments:**

No comments were made.

## **Community Presentation: Robt Martin Seda-Schreiber, Chief Activist of Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice (BRCSJ)–Natalie Biello (Community Organizer & Doula-in-Residence)**

Chair Olivares–Weber thanked Natalie Biello for being present tonight. Ms. Biello then introduced herself, before starting her presentation and sharing information on the work done by the BRCSJ. She explained that the center opened about 2 months ago, after being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. BRCSJ started and continues to offer Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) testing, prevention and care. The center also holds diversity and inclusion training, free therapy and counseling for the LGBTQIA youth (and any marginalized folks that need this and want to come to the center) and CPR training was recently through partnering with Penn Medicine. This is a community activist center and educational bridge, and a safe space. Safe spaces are open at the center Monday through Friday, from 10am-4pm, for anyone who just needs a place to be or has concerns or needs, and all are welcome by staff and trained volunteers.

Ms. Biello also shared her personal story on what brought her to the BRCSJ and offered information on free doula services provided by the center. Councilwoman Leticia Fraga asked if there is a certification process to become a doula, and whether the center’s doulas do at-home birth assistance. Ms. Biello explained there is a certification process, and their staff currently use the Uzazi Village Doula Training. Their doulas currently do not offer at-home birth assistance, though they assist patients in-hospital/clinical settings. Chair Olivares–Weber asked whether there are any restrictions right now due to the pandemic. Ms. Biello explained one doula and one birth person is allowed to be present during the birth.



Lina Genovesi asked whether the population that the center caters to can be broadened to all people, other than just the marginalized groups. Ms. Biello explained the main focus and support for marginalized groups, as well as why the focus is on them, though all people are welcome and offered assistance, and she hopes that more information on doula assistance can be shared with more people.

Chair Olivares–Weber asked for the location or contact person where people in need from our community can be sent to for assistance from the center. Ms. Biello asked for the BRCSJ information to be passed along by PHSC and they will assist all who are sent their way. Mr. Heilner also asked for the new physical location, which is 12 Stockton Street, Princeton. He asked to put Ms. Biello in touch with the executive director of the Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF), regarding Spanish speaking doulas.

### **Director's Report**

Kimberly Figueroa-Martinez gave a short summary on behalf of Director Rhodalynn Jones. She reported an update on the 2022 Summer Youth Employment Program, which had its first meeting last week and will meet again tomorrow, and that they are continuing to work on summer youth employment and getting ready for the work to start on July 5. She added that Princeton's fourth annual Wheels Rodeo on May 17 was a success, and everything went smoothly.

### **Council Updates**

Councilwoman Fraga reported that the Community Center Feasibility Task Force (CCFTF) will be presenting to council at the meeting on Monday, May 23. The meeting is seeking that a steering committee be formed to explore how to move forward on some of the recommendations.

The other item she shared was that the Cannabis follow-up community meeting was last night. Not as many people attended as the first meeting, so it was not as long. She and Councilman Leighton Newlin were ready to recommend moving forward on allowing a dispensary in town, however, there was pressure from members of the public who were opposed to it and want Princeton to wait. Based on feedback from council, the decision is to wait. This does not mean that next year there will not be action on this topic, but it is agreed that there are other priorities to work on as council. Councilwoman Fraga also shared that she does not feel that the local press shared what she said in complete context and the press also misquoted Mr. Heilner. She stated that she shared more concern for what children have access to already -the illegal substances, and she would like to work on resolving this issue with people who are concerned about allowing a legal dispensary for adults.

Mr. Heilner asked whether the town is coming up with education programs regarding Cannabis as recommended by the Board of Health (BOH). Corner House is already working on cannabis-related education materials, and the BOH already posted informational materials on their website.

Ms. Nieves asked about the margins relating to cannabis voting in Princeton. Councilwoman Fraga explained that 11k Princetonians voted in favor of legalizing recreational cannabis for adults in town, and briefly discussed the numbers in favor and against the cannabis legalization, through a petition and survey. She also expressed concern for the personal attacks that were made against members of the Cannabis Task Force by residents who were opposed to the legalization of recreational cannabis. Mr. Heilner thanked Councilwoman Fraga for all of the work she put in on this issue, and commented on petitions and the change they can help bring about.

### **Subcommittee Reports and Updates**

#### *Immigration*

Mr. Heilner spoke about the subcommittee's immigration event, and that the June 5<sup>th</sup> date must be moved to Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, from 3-5pm, due to the library being unavailable for the original date. Chair Olivares–Weber added that Gwendolyn Krol, the Vulnerable Population Outreach Coordinator for the Princeton Health Department, cannot make the event, but Princeton Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser will make sure that there is



representation at this event. She is still waiting to hear back from the Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF) about attending.

Mr. Heilner added that those who can attend and help, should be at the Library at about 2pm. He elaborated on planning details, such as doing presentations bi-lingually as needed, and lengths of presentations. Ming Kuang volunteered her assistance at this event, though she cannot stay for the whole duration. Chair Olivares–Weber added that the library will provide refreshments and snacks. She reminded board members that this is an opportunity to help with setting it up and being there to talk with the community and about what the PHSC does.

#### *Outreach/Needs Assessment*

Chair Olivares–Weber explained that there is nothing to report tonight other than that they sent a reminder for the organizations to fill out the last part of the survey that they sent, and this taskforce will start reviewing the data and working on the presentation for council and mayor.

#### *Community Needs and Social Equity*

Nothing to report.

#### *Welcoming America*

Chair Olivares–Weber explained that we are in conversation with the library for another event, they usually do the citizenship ceremony for Welcoming America, though this will done this year at Princeton University. The library asked about doing another event then, maybe a series of stories for immigrants for Welcoming Week, in partnership with the PHSC. Ms. Kuang asked for more details on Welcoming Week. Chair Olivares–Weber explained it is an organizational event related to immigrants, saying everyone is welcome in this city. We have it every September and partner with different organizations to have events for this week, though it was not done last year due to the pandemic. Mr. Heilner added more about the history of this event.

#### **Discussion**

##### *Immigration Event*

This topic was already discussed.

#### **Adjournment**

The motion to adjourn at 7:25 p.m. was moved by Mr. Heilner, seconded by Ms. Nieves, and affirmatively carried by all those present.

Respectfully submitted by:

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*Paula Alexeev*

Recording Secretary

Princeton Human Services Commission