



# PRINCETON HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2021 \* by Zoom

Monument Hall, East Meeting Room, Princeton, NJ 08540

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## **Board Members – Present**

John Heilner (*LE*)  
Bryan Hill  
Khristina Gonzalez  
Monique Jones  
Loydes Nieves, Alt.  
Veronica Olivares–Weber, Chair

Larry Spruill, Vice Chair  
Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison

## **Board Members Absent**

Moriah Akrong  
Ericka Deglau  
Vacant, Alt.

## **Staff Present**

Melissa Urias, Director, Ex-Officio  
TK Oluwafemi, Outreach Coordinator

*Minutes Submitted by:*  
Julie Moy, Board Secretary

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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 6:00 pm. She recited the announcement: *In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: “In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required by the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice was provided of the date, time and location of this regular meeting by posting a copy with the Clerk’s Office and by emailing copies to the Princeton Packet and the Town Topics.”* Chair Olivares–Weber recited the Land of Acknowledgement for Indigenous People pledge.

## **Community Guest Presenters**

*Christine Symington, Sustainable Princeton*

Ms. Symington introduced the staff. She explained what Sustainable Princeton’s mission and goals are. She acknowledged Ms. Urias and Mr. Heilner on their roles with the Changing the Landscape Steering Committee.

Ms. Symington explained the project, *Changing the Landscape, Healthy Yards, Healthy People*; they are partnering with other community groups. Ms. Symington described the goals and mission of the organization: to improve landscaping practices and the health and safety of the landscape workers. Her presentation included details of this project. A survey of the landscape owners was done; 21 responded. Tammy Sands, Environmental Commission Chair, explained the meeting process and what occurred. There was discussion on registering the landscaping businesses and the process. There was a meeting that included stakeholders and landscape owners to discuss issue. Landscapers were able to express their concerns in switching equipment to electric and how it would affect them overall. The biggest impact to the landscapers is the financial aspect. The floor was open to the Commission for questions. The equipment noise is more prominent with residents working from home due to the pandemic. Using electric equipment will take more time to do the work.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2021**

The motion to approve the regular meeting minutes dated *May 19, 2021* was first moved by Ms. Nieves seconded by Ms. Gonzalez all in favor by voice vote.

## **Director’s Report – Melissa Urias**

*Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)*

Ms. Urias reported the program will begin in two weeks. The majority of the students attended the job fair on June 1, 2021, which was successful; all the employers were present. Virtual interviews were scheduled for the students to experience. All students were placed; Ms. Urias recited the list of participating employers. Arm In Arm will host its financial workshops for the students beginning next week. Participants attending 3 out of the 4 workshops will receive an additional financial incentive.

### *Back Pack Drive*

Ms. Urias reported that the Back Pack Drive has begun. The SYEP intern will assist with the donation coordination.

### *General Assistance*

There are currently six open cases; one new case was opened. One case was closed; they received SSI approval. There is one case pending. The COVID waivers are still in place.

Ms. Urias recommended all the Commission members to sign up for email notification to receive updated information from Princeton. She also suggested they sign up for the Mayor's newsletter.

### *Staff Activity*

Talitha Koumi Oluwafemi, Outreach Coordinator

Ms. Oluwafemi reported on her outreach activities in the community. Ms. Oluwafemi is also working along with the Health Dept.'s outreach coordinator.

Mr. Spruill asked if the FreeB bus will be returning to operation. Councilwoman Fraga responded; service stopped when the pandemic. Some of the vehicles need to be replaced; the Municipality is considering replacing with electric vehicles. She stated that services are still available to the seniors.

### **Council Update, Leticia Fraga**

Councilwoman Fraga reported on the Civil Rights Commission (CRC) activities; Juneteenth resolution was adopted by the Council.

Councilwoman Fraga reported the Pride Flag raising was a success.

Councilwoman Fraga reported that the Cannabis Task Force will host a community wide meeting on June 23 to solicit input for recommendations of how marijuana should be allowed to dispense. 70% of voters voted to legalize recreational use marijuana. The Task Force would be responsible to decide how the tax revenues from marijuana sales would be allocated.

Councilwoman Fraga reported on the Community Center Task Force is seeking members; application is on the website.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Food, Larry Spruill**

Mr. Spruill reported that he was at meeting with the food insecurity group on June 1. The YMCA changed their food distribution schedule to bi-monthly. Families on the Free/Reduced Lunch program will be receiving additional money on their EBT card. Ms. Urias explained, at the beginning of the pandemic, the NJ Dept. of Human Services has given additional funds to families who received free and reduced lunch; the schools provide list of families to the NJDHS; parents do not need to apply.

Mr. Spruill reported that Mr. Rogers' Neighbors Kindness Project has moved out the Church to the Farmer's Market. He is not sure if they secured a tent to protect them from the elements.

#### **Housing, Veronica Olivares-Weber**

Chair Olivares-Weber reported that the subcommittee met today in collaboration with the Immigration Subcommittee. They met with Susan Naples, Deputy Director Legal Services of Central NJ. She provided an update of the meeting.

#### **Immigration, John Heilner**

Ms. Nieves reported that they met last week to reassess their goals. She explained the four major goals: outreach, employment opportunities, rental assistance and assisting the unaccompanied minors.

**Outreach Needs Assessment, Erika Deglau**

The subcommittee has a presentation that was tabled to the next meeting.

The motion to table the presentation was first made by Ms. Gonzalez, seconded by Ms. Jones, all in favor by voice vote.

**Youth Committee, Veronica Olivares–Weber**

This subcommittee is no longer in place. We will have a HSC liaison on Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) and a YAC student on HSC. YAC is only in session during the academic year.

**New Item**

*Princeton University Art Museum – Loteria Mexican Bingo*

Councilwoman Fraga reported on the Loteria Mexican Bingo event hosted by the University, that will take place when the students return. The University is asked this Commission to co–sponsor the event by assisting in marketing.

The motion to participate as a co–sponsor for the University’s Loteria Mexican Bingo event was first moved by Mr. Spruill, seconded by Ms. Nieves, all in favor by voice vote.

*Health Subcommittee – Bryan Hill*

Mr. Hill met with Dr. Meredith Hodach–Avalos, Chair of the Board of Health (BOH). They discussed liaison roles between this Commission and the BOH. Mr. Hill explained his proposal; he will be the liaison for the Human Services Commission at the Board of Health meetings.

Chair Olivares–Weber reported that she met with Darrell Penn and Tommy Parker from the Board of Health. BOH is working on the resolution “*Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis*”. BOH is soliciting input from this Commission and the Civil Rights Commission for their proposed resolution. BOH will be presenting their resolution to the Council.

Chair Olivares–Weber announced that Jorge Narvaez has resigned from this Commission. It can be discussed at the next meeting if we are interested in filling the alternation position at this time.

**Adjournment**

The motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm was first made by Mr. Spruill seconded by Ms. Nieves, all in favor by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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*Julie Moy*  
Recording Secretary