SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT

JUNE 11, 2020
5:30 PM

MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown was held remotely via WebEx and livestreamed on the City of Middletown's Facebook page on Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 5:30 PM.

Present:	Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell	Councilman Vincent Loffredo.
	Councilwoman Meghan Carta	Councilman Anthony Mangiafico
	Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.	Councilman Edward McKeon
	Councilman Darnell Ford	Councilman Eugene Nocera
	Councilman Edward Ford, Jr. (arrive 5:35PM)	Councilman Philip Pessina
	Councilman Anthony Gennaro, Sr.	Councilwoman Linda Salafia
Also Present:	Mayor Benjamin D. Florsheim, Chair	Corporation Counsel Daniel Ryan, Esq.
	Linda Reed, Council Clerk	General Counsel Brig Smith, Esq.

Members of the Public: WebEx (39 attendees) and Facebook livestream (unknown number of viewers)

1. Call to Order

Mayor Benjamin Florsheim calls the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

The Clerk reads the Call of the Meeting and the Chair declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. The Chair asks Councilman Philip Pessina to display the American flag. He invites the Councilmembers to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public Hearing Opens

The Chair declares the public hearing open at 5:34 PM. Any member of the public wishing to speak may indicate by raising their hand using the WebEx function. When called on, they are asked to state their name and address for the record and their comments are limited to a five (5) minutes. The Council Rules stipulate that the public hearing is limited to 30 minutes, as verified by the Corporation Counsel Daniel Ryan. If needed, the Council may extend that 30 minute time limitation.

Sacha Armstrong Crockett (12 Shirleys Court): She supports the Permanent Taskforce on Anti-Racism. She believes that we all support things like this as a community. They voted for a Mayor with progressive values and a predominantly Democratic Common Council. They are ready for to see what anti-racist reform really looks like. We all speak from a place of emotion on race issues, but she will try to speak as a business person. As a local reallot, who works in Middletown, the highest percentage of people leaving Middletown are seniors and aging population, not because they are moving to Florida. In general, millennials make up the largest pool of home buyers. She raises this point because the Council needs to understand who Middletown is and who we are trying to serve. They are looking at Middletown as a goal town where we are diverse and socially responsible. We need to make moves like this. There are a lot of issues coming up and she asks that the Council and Mayor remember that in restructuring the Police Department and things like changing the middle school name, cannot pander to old ideas of what Middletown was. We need to listen to people who are buying into this community, buying homes at the highest percentage. These are people, who want to stay here and raise their families. This is who we should be listening to. She hopes that we will follow Mayor Florsheim's lead and understand that we need to be risk takers in order to keep our town as equal and equitable as possible.

Precious Price (143 Prospect Street): She is calling to speak as a Commission of the Human Relations Commission. She is also the Director of the Middletown Racial Justice Coalition and for the City and the Commission's work over that past three (3) years. The Clerk asks if she is speaking as a member of the Human Relations Commission, explaining that the information is asked to be sure that it is reflected properly in the minutes. She states that she is on the Commission and is speaking as all three. She reiterates that she is a Commissioner on the Human Relations Commission. She is calling to urge the Council to pass this resolution to create the Permanent

Taskforce on Anti-Racism. In her experience on the Commission, they have done some amazing work. It was hard and a lot, three (3) years in the making. The report will come out soon. The work took a lot of time because it did have the space and capacity to be what it is. It was under a Commission staffed by one person, who is overworked and understaffed. Everything that had to do, they had to wait. It was a longer process than it needed to be. In her opinion, it is time to elevate that work. It is time to show that Middletown is anti-racism work. It is time to give us sources and allocate the funding for that work. They were working on a very tight budget under this Commission. She urges the Council, if they pass this, to put some financial teeth to it. It is time to talk about policies and cultures and practices. This cannot be understaffed. It cannot be underfunded. She heard the question before as to what kind of teeth will this have. She puts this question back to the Council: how ready are they to do this work. She puts this question to them. If they do not believe that his work is important, if they are on the Council for other reasons than believing that Black Lives Matter, that black people deserve to be happy and healthy and safe in Middletown, then she urges that those Councilmembers vote "no" so everyone can see who they are. If you are ready to do this work and to be part of this work and the way it deserves to be, then she urges Councilmembers to vote "yes." She urges the Council to put significant funding into this taskforce.

Jennifer Kleindienst (241 West Street): She echoes the comments of the two (2) previous speakers. She is in full support of the Permanent taskforce on Anti-Racism. There are obviously many recent events that have led to this being on the agenda, but these recent events come with a long history, with centuries of racism. Middletown has done many things positively, but also has a lot of work to do in a variety of ways. Creating both the taskforce and providing the funding behind this is the only way to show that the City is serious about this effort and. She urges the Council to vote yes.

Diana Martinez (41 Hotchkiss Street): She is a member of the Middletown Racial Justice Commission and a Middletown Public School parent. She asks that the Council vote to approve this resolution. People of color in this City are not just black when they go to school or when they interact with the police. They are people of color when they interact with every level of municipal government and every aspect of life in Middletown. Every available resource to them, both data and anecdotal evidence from people who live in town will tell the Council, time and time again, that they have worse experience and outcomes than white folks at every level in interactions within systems. She thinks that is why it is important that this work be centrally located and not siloed off in a separate section of committees or government. It is important for this work to come from the top down, which is why she supports this committee be under the Mayor directly, focusing on all aspects of life in town and not just some.

Beverly Lawrence (452 Long Lane): She is a member of the Middletown Racial Justice Coalition. She has been a partner with Human Relations Commission, going to the meetings for three (3) years. At the end of the meeting, she can give her input, her feedback, and her opinion, but at the end of the meeting, she does not have a vote. Through all of this, she is in favor of having this in the mayor's office, if the Council passes this resolution, because as a black mother and community leader, their voices need to be heard. When they did the focus groups and community conversations, this was the question of black and brown people: What is this information? Where is it going? What are you going to do with this information? Black and brown people are tired of having nothing happen in their community. She is vary in favor if this happening, there needs to be policy change and system change also in this community.

Tristan Donaldson (15 Tall Timbers Road): He seconds everything that has been said. Make this the town priority. Do not take half measures every life is at stake by this decision. Black lives matter. Black women matter. Black queer folks matter. All black lives matter.

Molly Aunger (13 Red Glen): She just got off a 3 hour phone call with her group at Yale law School where she works. The policing and defunding policing is a hot topic today. The consensus of the group was that we cannot talk about just one piece of this – just the police – without talking about community vitality. She thinks that the creation of this commission to oversee and look at all aspects of life in Middletown and how they affect our black and brown population is imperative. She ask the Council to push this forward under the purview of the mayor's office so that the City can be successful in being a vital community for all of Middletown's citizens.

Bryan Chong (Wesleyan University student and Co-Chair of Wesleyan Democrats): He is speaking in favor of this resolution to establish this Taskforce. He also asks the Counicl to consider what will be the financial teeth of this taskforce. Throughout the country, we see a lot of city governments that end up not going anywhere because they do not have the resources that they need to accomplish the mission they are set out to do. His colleagues on Wesleyan Democrats crunched some numbers in the Middletown budget today. For every $1.00 that goes to the Middletown Police, only 4.5 cents are spend on the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Only 1.87 cents are spent on Youth Services; 5.4 cents are spent on Health; 6.3 cents are spent on Planning, Conservation & Development; and 10.9 cents are spent on Recreation & Community Services. They do not think that it is inappropriate to have a vision of funding, especially in the mission of supporting people of color, especially black people throughout community. We believe hope that Council really considers exactly where is the financial teeth in this taskforce and how it will go about accomplishing the mission that it is set out to do.

Monica Belyea (186 College Street): She is in favor of moving this taskforce forward. As the previous caller said, she is in favor of giving this taskforce teeth – funding - and making it a priority. We cannot wait if we are going to enact the real changes that are needed, the goals and in all systems in the community. We have to have a taskforce at the mayor's level and it really needs to be well funded. She urges the Council to approve.

Sonya Hadley (1218 Randolph Road): She is speaking in favor of creating the permanent Committee on Anti-racism. She grew up in this community and has experience with racism. She has seen (*inaudible*) racism especially towards young people *(inaudible*). It continues to have a very negative effect on our community, everyone in our community, but especially our community of color. She also had the opportunity to work alongside people working on anti-racism here in Middletown. It is a privilege. While the community has made great strides forward due to thoughtful and positive process due to generations of organizers, it is time to cement that work into the institution of the City. It should be placed in the Mayor's office. It should be the center for every decision that the City makes. It is time for every City decision to be centered on anti-racism and a racial justice lens. This is the only way to address structural racism that exists in all parts of society and in the educational system where we see certain members of the community pushed away from success. We see this in housing, public health, hiring, and policing. It is time to work together to develop real solutions that will address our country's history of white supremacy and address anti-racism this is ongoing work. It is important that we have people housed in our government that is going to be centers and people that are the most impacted and be consciously moving this work forward. She also seconds all that calls that have said to make this a priority for Middletown. It is not good enough to claim to be anti, not to be racist. Our City, our people, and our leaders need to commit to being actively anti-racist and this is a very important step in getting there. She urges the Council to vote to create this anti-racism taskforce.

Maya Gomberg is the next speaker, but the Council Clerk is unable to unmute the speaker. While addressing that technical issue, the Council Clerk moves to the next speaker.

Josh Lafray (31 Miller Street): He is calling to support this motion he want to be certain that this effort of public security, so people feel good that it exists, but it has no actual power to do anything. Hartford has already started with policy changes. Many other States across the country have started with policy changes. He urges the Council to set a good example for our State, for our City, and be consistent in our efforts as this will be a marathon. Let's make sure this is really at the forefront. He yields his time.

Maya Gomberg (157 Church Street): She is speaking as a board member of Wesleyan Democrats and as a member of Middletown Mutual Aid Collective to speak in support of the Anti-Racism Taskforce. She is glad that this item is being brought o the City's attention. She asks what specific powers this taskforce will have, whether it will be directly under the Mayor's office, and where the funds will come from to make sure that his taskforce has teeth, She believes that we, as a City, need to make sure that we give true resources to this taskforce to make sure that they are able to make the changes that we need to see in our City. She thinks that money will be well spent on this taskforce. She knows that it is sometimes difficult to find money in a budget where it spends so much on police. She hopes that they reallocate some of the funds in the budget to this taskforce. She hopes that this evening that the City budget does not include an increase in the Police Department allocation of funds to increase the numbers on the on the Police departments. She appreciates the work of the Council.

The Chair asks if there are any other speakers.

The Council Clerk reports that there are no more speakers in the queue.

The Chair asks that the Council wait a few more seconds to see if there are any other members of the pubic looking to speak.

Jade Levy (7 Forest Glen Circle): She is speaking in full support of an anti-racism entity. She is a former Middletown High student. She has not only experienced racial bias, but has seen it among her peers. It is especially harmful at such an impressionable time in one's life. She does not think that anyone should grow up and experience these issues in Middletown. We have the opportunity now to change this through the creation of this committee. She has participated in her community at the school to discs the issues of racial inequity and ways to improve the community. She thinks that having a committee that is well funded and well-staffed will lead to amazing change which many have tried to achieve, but not had the resources or power to do so. It is imperative that, if Middletown is in support of people of color that we perform the necessary actions creating this committee to make sure that those in this community know we stand in solidarity with them. She hopes that Council votes in favor of creation of this taskforce.

Emily McEvoy (254 Carriage Crossing Lane): She works with the North End Action Team. She is speaking in favor of this taskforce. She suggests that part of the taskforce be outreach to people that do not have internet access because folks, who don't have internet access, are not the ones on this call giving input tonight. This is an important part of the constituency that they deal with on a daily basis at the North End Action Team. She is speaking on behalf of that population and advocating that this work be successful in the North End neighborhood.

The Chair asks if there are any other speaker and the Council Clerk confirms that there is currently no one else in the queue.

The Chair calls on Councilman Edward McKeon.

Councilman McKeon states that the **Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Michael Conner, has submitted a letter addressing this matter.** The Chair asks the Council Clerk to read Dr. Conner's letter into the record.

> June 11, 2020
> Michael T. Conner, Ed.D.
> 40 Talias Trail
> Middletown, CT
>
> Mayor Florsheim and Middletown Common Council,
>
> I want to thank you for your deliberate and intentional leadership with moving Middletown in a "forever forward" direction under distressed time. First, I want to apologize for not attending the Common Council meeting this evening – currently our Parent Leadership Training Institute graduation is being held virtually.
>
> During the past three years I served as superintendent of this wonderful community, my primary goal has been to create and elicit change grounded in the work of ***innovation*** and ***equity***. As we look to continue this trajectory of meaningful change for families and students, I support the creation of a task force to address inequities we face as a community – specifically anti-racism work in government, law enforcement, and education. Our nation has been protesting the inequities that black men, women, and people of color encounter on a daily basis. Painstakingly, it has taken the heinous murder of George Floyd for a serious call to action – radical change with a sense of urgency. Thank you for acknowledging that societal and institutional racism exist in our communities and action must be taken in a swift manner – this was liberating.
>
> I write this letter in support of the Mayor's Task Force to accelerate the work as well as leverage the existing work of the Human Relations Commission. Goals, objectives, and strategic priorities will be defined; however, I urge the council to move forward with approving the task force on the framework of addressing systemic racism. The content of this letter is not to minimize the previous work of individuals on this council – my vitality and intent is to ensure that anti-racism work is a priority for all in Middletown.
>
> The collective theme I continuously hear in the community is "*act now*." I believe this task force will address the mandates from our constituents – I applaud and support this step forward by Mayor Florsheim, Chief Peterson, and our elected officials in Middletown.
>
> Thank you.

Councilman McKeon states that he believes that Dr. Conner meant Chief of Staff.

Councilman McKeon notes that David Roane is present to speak.

The Council Clerk verified that Mr. Roane is not in the speaker's queue. In searching the attendee roster, she initially confirms that she does not see Mr. Roane's name listed. Upon finding Mr. Roane in the caller list, he is unmuted to address the Common Council.

David Roane (352 Newfield Street): He states that he is speaking in favor of the Mayor's taskforce. He states that the way it was originally proposed in the June meeting is what he is in favor of. When he read the substitute resolution, the first thing that crossed his mind was, "Here we go again." They are trying to stop doing what the taskforce should be doing. He will be quick. If what happened to George Floyd had been four (4) black police officers on his neck, dealing with a white person, we would not be having this conversation tonight. There would be no resolution before the Council tonight to come up with a taskforce to try to do something. These officers would be history already and life would go on as normal. He was excited when he saw the first resolution, the original one, presented by the Mayor's office. Tonight, seeing this 2nd resolution, it is nothing but a bunch of words. If you do that was, it's a smokescreen. It is basically saying, okay, lets given them people a taskforce that is not going to do anything and life in Middletown will go on as normal. Whatever happened to black people and we would say, "We're with you with black lives matters, etc. it trouble him that someone had the audacity to write this mumbo-jumbo substitute resolution. If you are going to It., he encourages the Council to stand up and vote and pass it as the original resolution, not the substitute one, He has been here a long time, and, some of the Councilmembers may disagree with him, but there's someone on the Council, who was in in the past. He has nothing against the Human Relations Department or the City of Middletown, but the Human Relations Commission was never setup to handle matters like this, like the purpose and right of black lives matter. It was set up to help with rent and things like that. It was smokescreen in all honesty. He

asks the Council to vote "yes," but to vote on the original resolution. He asks that they stand up and be real.

Patti Anne Vassia (234 South Main Street): She commends everyone, who has spoken, and is delighted so many have spoken. To her, the resolution is the resolution. What happens next is in the hands of the Council and the Mayor. She is going to trust, because of the climate and the support the resolution has that this will have fair representation, staffing, and the means to make goals and outcomes, measurable outcomes. If we don't have a plan, in sync with the education strategic operation plan and plan of equity, we are on the verge of doing. The next best thing that she believes has happened in the 50 years of her knowing and working in Middletown. She and David Roane were involved in an effort back in the early 1970s. They get a little tired of doing the same thing over and over again. This is out time, our opportunity. She has no trouble with the resolution; rather, it is how it will be implemented and who is going to be on it, and who is going to be held accountable. She hopes it will the group we elected, who seems very committed to this.

The Chair states that the public hearing has now run about 30 minutes. The Chair asks if there are any other members of the public looking to speak. The Council Clerk confirms that here are no other members of the public in the queue to speak.

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera asks the Mayor if he would speak, for the benefit of the public. He thanks the public for their comments. Nearly everyone, who spoke, wants to know what is behind this and are here teeth around this proposal, what we were willing to commit to it, what the Council will be doing at the budget hearing, to assure that there is a structure that we can accomplish our goals.

The Chair replies that, if this is an appropriate time, he can speak to this issue. He asks the Corporation Counsel Daniel Ryan for his opinion as to whether or not he may speak

Corporation Counsel Ryan replies that it is appropriate for the Mayor to speak at this time.

The Chair thanks everyone who spoke. It is gratifying to hear from so many members often public, more than twice what we had for the budget hearing last week. He reminds the Council that there is a budget approval meeting at 7:00 PM, The Council will be entertaining the budget for FY 20-21, which includes about $27,000 in funding, which the City has appropriated to anti-racism work and is housed with the Human Relations Commission. If this vote passes, they will be moving that work to be house d and staffed through the Mayor's office. The $27,000 funding has allowed the City to conduct important work over the past couple of years. There are Councilmembers here, who hare serving currently on the Human Relations Commission, who will speak to that. There are also many members of the public, who have been involved in this work over the past few years. He states, noting that he believes that he speaks for the Council sponsors of this item as well as himself, is to make sure that the work now taking place, as the public pointed out, the Human Relations Commission was never set up to take on this kind of on-going, project based, City-funded work. They are set up as an advisory committee doing very important work. They will continue to be involved in all of the anti-racism work that the City takes on. In terms of staffing and resources, that bringing it into and creating its own standalone taskforce under the Mayor's office and continuing that funding stream is the recipe for making sure that the research, survey, and focus groups, which have been done – all of the wok that has been done day in and day out over the past couple of years – thanks to Councilman Nocera, Councilman Ford, and Councilwoman Blackwell, who have been intimately involved in that work, some for years now. The hope is to take that work and make sure it is turned into action. With this taskforce, he shares with the public the allergy to taskforces in general. They often are things to shelf away as with work that you do not want to focus on day in and day out. We want to be sure it is structured so that it has a presence in City government and City business. He hopes that everyone, who called in, will hold all of us accountable. He does additional want to add, in the spirit of the question and the budget hearing, they all received – he and the Councilmembers – numerous last minute communications from the public about the City budget, especially the Police budget. He thinks it's unfortunate that they were not received at the public hearing last week, but he is glad that they have been received in time for tonight's budget adoption meeting. It raised the important question about the Middletown Police budget and whether there is going to be increases in funding for this project, but decreases in the police budget, he can speak to that more at the 7:0 PM budget approval meeting, He has been working all day with the Council to try to make adjustments. He does not know how much is appropriate to share before the 7:00 PM meeting, but he does invite viewers to join them at the 7:00 PM meeting to offer input on the final version of this budget as adjusted by the Council. Thank you again to everyone who spoke tonight.

5. Public Hearing Closes

The Chair closes the public hearing 6:13 PM.

6. Resolutions, Ordinances, etc.

In opening this section on resolutions and ordinances, the Chair explains that the person introducing this resolution, is the first woman of color on the Council in the City's history. He thanks Councilwoman Blackwell for her service and calls on her for this agenda item.

A. Approving that the *Mayor's Permanent Task Force on Anti-Racism* be established as a Committee of the City of Middletown; that the anti-racism work performed by the Human Relations Commission shall henceforth be performed by said Task Force; and that the Common Council shall approve membership of the Task Force at a future meeting of the Common Council at a date to be determined. *(TABLED on June 1, 2020 to June 11, 2020 special meeting; K: review/resolution/ CC antiracism taskforce RES 35-20 – 1 June 2020)*

Resolution Number: 35-20
Date: June 1, 2020

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Middletown joins the nation in mourning the unjust death of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department, along with the deaths of countless other Black Americans as a result of white supremacist violence, and

WHEREAS, since the fall of 2017, the City of Middletown has been engaged in community-wide anti-racism work through the leadership and efforts of its Human Relations Commission, in partnership with other community organizations including the Middletown Racial Justice Coalition, and

WHEREAS, the work of the Commission on the matter of anti-racism in the City of Middletown, while fruitful and productive, remains unfinished, and

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Middletown recognizes the importance of elevating anti-racism work, and aims to respond to the urgency of the current moment of civil unrest in our country by declaring such work as a top priority for the City, the Mayor, and the residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN: that the Mayor's Permanent Task Force on Anti-Racism be hereby established as a Committee of the City of Middletown.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the anti-racism work heretofore performed by the Human Relations Commission shall henceforth be performed by said Task Force.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Common Council shall approve membership of the Task Force at a future meeting of the Common Council at a date to be determined.

Status: TABLED to Special Meeting on June 11, 2020
by Common Council, City of Middletown
at its meeting held on: JUNE 1, 2020

<u>SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION</u>: Approving that the City of Middletown reiterates that it rejects and renounces any and all acts, forms, and philosophies, which may engender and/or support, either directly or indirectly, racial, ethnic, and/or religious supremacy, intolerance, hatred, and/or any other threat to, and/or breach of, the fundamental rights and liberties as set forth in, and as guaranteed by, the United States Constitution and our State and Federal laws; and that the Common Council requests that Office of General Counsel provide to them a proposed amendment to the *City of Middletown's Code of Ordinances,* to create a *Permanent Taskforce on Anti-Racism* while building upon our City's existing law under which the Commission on Human Relations currently functions; and that such proposed amendment be ready for the Common Council's consideration, including, but not limited to public hearing, at our next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, July 6, 2020.

APPROVED

RESOLUTION No. 36-20; K: review/ resolution/ CC antiracism taskforce RES 36-20 – 11 June 2020

WHEREAS, following the recent tragic death of George Floyd, the Common Council of the City of Middletown hereby acknowledges that our nation and our individual communities are experiencing increasing civil unrest and public debate involving the many fundamental rights and liberties, both natural and legal, as set forth in the United States Constitution and in our State and Federal laws; and

WHEREAS, collectively, the United States Constitution, State and Federal laws, and Federal courts set forth the fundamental rights and liberties unique to this nation, including, but not limited to, guarantees and protections pertaining to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, employment, age, gender, pregnancy, citizenship, veterans, marital status, familial status, housing, disability, equal access, and the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, this nation and its people have evolved as a society and culture, so that today's needs are profoundly different from the needs of those who originally created this nation's framework in the 18th century; and

WHEREAS, although the needs of our nation and its people have changed since the 18th century, there is a consensus that these fundamental rights and liberties, which may have evolved, since originally enunciated, must be preserved and extend to, and must be guaranteed for, all people in this nation; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council's bipartisan commitment to these issues and concerns surrounding the rights and liberties of all people is longstanding, evidenced by adoption of an Ordinance in February 1978, some 42 years ago, creating a permanent City authority – the Commission on Human Relations -- to ensure that this commitment is fulfilled; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the *City of Middletown's Code of Ordinance*, the work by the City's Commission on Human Relations focuses on these fundamental rights and liberties; namely:

1. At §14-3, the City of Middletown's Commission on Human Relations is charged with the following functions; namely:

A. fostering mutual understanding and respect among all racial, religious, and ethnic groups of this community;

B. ensuring equality of treatment of any racial, religious or ethnic group, or any of its members;

C. assuring equality of opportunity for all individuals;

D. cooperating with governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations having functions similar to this Commission; and

E. making such studies, as in the judgement of the Commission, will aid in further the aims of this article;

2. Moreover, at §14-4, the City of Middletown's Commission on Human Relations is vested with the following duties and responsibilities; namely:

A. to enlist the cooperation of the various racial, religious, and ethnic groups, community organizations, labor organizations and fraternal and benevolent associations, and other groups in programs and campaigns devoted to eliminating group prejudice, intolerance, bigotry and discrimination;

B. to study the problems of prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, discrimination and disorder occasioned thereby in all or any fields of human relationship;

C. to receive complaints of racial, religious and ethnic group tensions, prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and disorder occasioned thereby, and discrimination against any persons, group of persons, organizations, or corporations, and to refer such complaints to the proper agency having jurisdiction in the particular matter;

D. to publish, when appropriate, publications and reports of research designed to promote good will and to minimize or eliminate prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and discrimination; and

E. to recommend to the Common Council legislation to aid in implementing, improving or strengthening programs to accomplish equality of opportunity and the elimination of prejudice, intolerance, bigotry and discrimination.
and

3. At §14-6 of the *Code*, the City of Middletown's Commission on Human Relations is charged with performing the duties required by ordinance or by resolution of the Common Council; and

WHEREAS, more recently, in response to growing unrest, on October 2, 2017, the Common Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 127-17, which authorized a special project, which is in now progress, under the auspices of the City of Middletown's Human Relations Commission, to determine how the City can foster the fundamental rights and liberties of all people with a particular focus on race and equality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Middletown's Common Council has acknowledged continuously, and remains united in, its longstanding, bipartisan commitment to guarantee and protect these fundamental rights and liberties for the City and its inhabitants; that is, that differences of race, creed, and national origin are essential to the health, safety, and welfare of this City and its inhabitants, and serve as a source of strength rather than as causes of discrimination, segregation, and restricted opportunity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN: the City of Middletown reiterates that it rejects and renounces any and all acts, forms, and philosophies, which may engender and/or support, either directly or indirectly, racial, ethnic, and/or religious supremacy, intolerance, hatred, and/or any other threat to, and/or breach of, the fundamental rights and liberties as set forth in, and as guaranteed by, the United States Constitution and our State and Federal laws; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Common Council requests that Office of General Counsel provide to them a proposed amendment to the *City of Middletown's Code of Ordinances,* to create a *Permanent Taskforce on Anti-Racism* while building upon our City's existing law under which the Commission on Human Relations currently functions; and that such proposed amendment be ready for the Common Council's consideration, including, but not limited to public hearing, at our next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, July 6, 2020.

Financial Impact: None

Councilwoman Blackwell states that she reads this proposed resolution with pride and humility. She explains that in lieu of the resolution that was introduced and subsequently tabled on June 1st regarding the implementation of the Permanence Taskforce on Anti-racism, She is offering a substitute resolution. Councilman Pessina seconds the introduction of the proposed substitute resolution

The Council Clerk notes that before going forward, the Council needs to vote to accept a substitute resolution in lieu of the tabled resolution.

The Chair and Corporation Counsel concur. The Chair asks if there is any discussion on the introduction a substitute resolution in lieu of the tabled resolution for consideration by the Council. There being none, the Chair calls for a roll call vote, asking the Council Clerk to read the roll:

Councilwoman Blackwell	aye
Councilwoman Carta	aye
Councilman Faulkner	aye
Councilman Darnell Ford	aye
Councilman Edward Ford	aye
Councilman Gennaro	aye
Councilman Loffredo	aye
Councilman Mangiafico	aye
Councilman McKeon	aye
Councilman Nocera	aye
Councilman Pessina	aye
Councilwoman Salafia	aye

The Chair states that the motion to introduce a substitute resolution in lieu of the tabled resolution is approved unanimously with 12 aye votes (Councilmembers Blackwell, Carta, Faulkner, D. Ford, E. Ford, Gennaro, Loffredo, Mangiafico, McKeon, Nocera, Pessina, and Salafia). The Chair states the matter is approved.

Councilwoman Blackwell reads the proposed substitute resolution. Having read the substitute resolution, Councilwoman Blackwell moves for approval. Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr. seconds the motion.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Linda Salafia.

Councilwoman Salafia states that she has a substitution that is 2-pages long and does not match what Councilwoman Blackwell just read.

The Chair asks if it is possible that she is looking at a budget meeting document.

Councilwoman Salafia replies that this document is setting up a taskforce.

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina states that, looking at the most updated agenda, Councilwoman Blackwell read the substitute resolution under Item 4A. She read it in lieu of the tabled resolution.

Councilwoman Blackwell confirms that she read the substitute resolution.

Councilman Pessina continues, saying that she read the approval language on the agenda, not the resolution its entirety. The agenda language matches what Councilwoman Blackwell read.

The Chair reiterates that the text on the agenda, the summary of the resolution, was read.

Councilwoman Salafia thanks the Chair for this information, adding that she is looking at the full text of the resolution.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Blackwell.

Councilwoman Blackwell states, as a matter of clarification, it is the pattern not to read the full text of the resolution and she is following the regular instructions that have been laid before the Council.

Councilwoman Salafia apologizes for any confusion.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo

Councilman Loffredo states that his recollection is that Councilman McKeon read the original resolution into the record in its entirety. He asks Councilman McKeon if that is accurate. That aside he asks what may be constitutional question as to how folks practice their religion. He has no problem with this, but as a City, if someone position is personal or otherwise and they believe there

religion is X, Y, or Z, it is just raises the question of religious supremacy and how that migth be interpreted or misinterpreted as people practice their religion as so many folks practice or don't practice or whatever demonization they may be or how they feel.. This is, from a legal point of view, how this is interpreted or how we would enforce someone saying X, Y, or Z in terms of their denomination or religious beliefs. He has no answer, but it strikes him as the fundamental right of the Constitution, the State Constitution, and so forth as to that issue. It may become a problem so he asks to seek further clarification and some research from Corporation Counsel or the Office of the General Counsel on how this is to be interpreted and applied.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner states that his question, noting that his name is on this resolution, his interpretation of this resolution is that the Council is asking the Office of General Counsel to work on how this fits into our structure and how its fits into our Ordinances and to bring that language back to the Council for a vote. He asks if this is correct.

The Chair replies that Councilman Faulkner is correct. We are not providing on this language tonight, but we will do that at the July meeting. At that time, the Council will also ask if the Office of General Counsel will provide a summary on these concerns.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Blackwell.

Councilwoman Blackwell states that, as the first woman of color on the Council, she is very proud to introduce this resolution this evening. Last week, when the resolution was introduced, she had a degree of trepidation, not because *(inaudible)* she embraces any opportunity to address racism. Her trepidation was based on not understanding the vision at the time going forward and not understanding the teeth – the financial support -- that this endeavor would have. She has since been informed and is now clear the vison, the goals, the objectives that are being set forth. She understands that the Council is also asking the Office of General Counsel to examine this endeavor. It is with great pride that she introduces this resolution.

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera is so please to hear these voices: Precious Price and Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell, who introduced this resolution, as well as Bev Lawrence and other outstanding members of the Human Relations Commission, who have worked toward this for the past two (2) years, developing goals. Now it is so important that it can be passed on to the taskforce. He greatly appreciates how this directly and intentionally connects the Human Relations Commission to the Taskforce because the work they have done is very important and cannot be sidelined. He has said this before. The report will show that policing and criminal justice is a concern in the community. Employment and housing are concerns. Health care and educational equity are concerns. There is a holistic view in the community, which is well done. The taskforce is in a good place because it has data that they can rely upon.

The Chair calls on Councilman Darnell Ford.

Councilman Ford states that there is a question regarding the LGBTQ community. He asks if the resolution covers that separately or as part of the whole. The language is specify, so is it covered as to general or orientation or things of that sort. He asks if that language should be added specifically to this resolution.

The Chair replies that is an excellent question.

Councilman Ford states that he does not want to take credit for this question.

The Chair replies that he does not believe that it is explicitly mentioned. They do have a taskforce that deal with LGBTQIA issues, which is a subject of separate conversations. That is definitely something that we will also look at with the Office of General Counsel with the band aid, if you will.

The Chair states hat he sees that both Councilman Edward McKeon and Councilman Edward Ford, Jr. are looking to speak. He calls on Councilman Ford.

Councilman Edward Ford states that *(inaudible)* racial justice in our community. This taskforce is a bold step, a step that needs to be taken. It should be a step followed by more action and change. He echoes the comments of his colleague Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell, not supporting the organ resolution, not because he is not concerned. He does not believe there is anyone on this Council who is not concerned with racial equity. He believes it needed clarity. He thanks the Mayor for supporting this resolution today as it is time for it. As a member of the Human Relations Commission, he thanks David Roane for pointing out that exact statement, noting that this just launches the work and it needs to go forward. This taskforce is needed and necessary. He is glad to support it and vote in favor of it, not just as a black man and a member of this Council. Let's move forward with this.

The Chair calls on Councilman Edward McKeon.

Councilman McKeon acknowledges the work of the Mayor's office pushing this forward, adding that this is actually where this effort started. He wants to be sure that people understand this. We voted for a progressive Mayor. He is proud to part of the Council, one of the most diverse Council's ever in this City. At a time when we have a racist as a President, he believes that it is essential, as former President Obama said the other day that it is the job of the local councils, the local boards of education, and the local mayors to make changes in this horrifying state that we are in. His heart goes out to David Roane, noting that he and Mr. Roane are about the same age. Mr. Roane went off to Vietnam, while Councilman McKeon marched in war protests. They were fighting this fight back then and things have not changed enough, He is happy to see that at the local level we are really starting to make this change. For those who showed up for this meeting and who have spoken, he appreciates their efforts. At the budget meeting later this evening, they will propose a cut in the police budget and a funding of the racial justice system with those funds. If people can come to that meeting and hear the detail, they can. We have heard their words; we have read their emails. He especially wants to thank all those who are out there on the lines, protesting and putting their good work forward. Thank you all, adding that it's great day for Middletown.

The Chair states that there are other Councilmembers looking to speak: Councilman Philip Pessina, Councilman Anthony Mangiafico, and Councilman Vincent Loffredo. The Chair calls on Councilman Pessina.

Councilman Philip Pessina states that he is wholeheartedly supporting this. As a Deputy Chief of Middletown Police and bringing community policing to Middletown, he sees this as an opportunity to really get a view of the great work that the Police Department currently does. It is always good to look at yourself first. The community looks at the other side, the areas of growth. His whole thing is to be on justice-based policing, which is the next level in his heart of community policing. Many places have worked and it works well in the community. He says this from being on the front lines. He is really excited this resolution, what the Council will be providing at the budget meeting, that he has the utmost respect for all of the speakers because, in his heart, he knows that this taskforce will be defining history in the City to provide equity and justice for all people in this City. He is honored to support the Mayor's resolution, fine work that he is ready to do. He believes that they are on the right path in the City. Both our children and our youth will benefit from this as we move forward.

The Chair calls on Councilman Anthony Mangiafico.

Councilman Anthony Mangiafico notes that his name is inadvertently omitted as a sponsor and he asks that it be added. Tonight is a very good step. It is not the time to stop and pat ourselves on the back as the hard work is ahead of us. He is ready and believes that his Council colleagues are ready.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Vincent Loffredo states that he would like to offer a friendly amendment for language unintentionally left out with regards to LGBTQ issue. He wants folks with sexual discrimination or sexual orientation **. . .** it was mentioned in the last "whereas" difference of race, creed, national, origin, and something of that nature in that section regarding sexual preference and orientation should be added *(inaudible*) as better phraseology. He reiterates that he offers this as a friendly amendment. It could also be included in the "Now Therefore Be It Resolved" either "directly *(inaudible*) ethnic, and/or religious" it could add reference to sexual orientation preference. He offers this as amending the resolution before this body as a friendly amendment. If there is a consensus, it would be included. He reiterates that he offers this for that purpose. The other question that he has is the "Be It Resolved" in terms of the membership, raised in the original resolution in terms of the permanent taskforce and so forth that still exists or does not exists now in this resolution.

Councilman Eugene Nocera offers to respond.

Multiple speakers (inaudible).

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera

Councilman Eugene Nocera states that the first point raised by Councilman Loffredo, he wants to point out that, in there (Human Relations) Committee work, adding that ha the Council will be receiving that report, discrimination against seniors or bisexuals, or sexual orientation was intentionally not part of their work. They know that these committees exist and, at time, should work, but this is an anti-racism taskforce. He recalls that at meeting about a year ago, Precious Price eloquently presented the goals of an anti-racism taskforce. He wishes that she could speak now, but adds that she did speak during the pubic comment section.

Councilman Loffredo responds to Councilman Nocera, stating that sexual orientation is purposefully left off of this. It is not an issue in addressing that form of discrimination.

Councilman Nocera replies, “yes,” adding it was not done to neglect or minimize the issue, but this is an anti-racism taskforce.

The Chair responds to the concerns raised by Councilman Loffredo, saying that, on the first point, it is Council feedback. He echoes Councilman Nocera’s comment, but it is important that LGBTQIA be represented on this committee. There needs to be acknowledgement of the many areas where racism and anti-queer overlap. At the same time, we can make sure that those thigs are true while maintaining this committee as an anti-racism taskforce and work to modify the Pride Committee as a more full-fledged taskforce on this issue he leaves it to the Council to take up the amendment, but he also wants to call on the Council Clerk.

The Council Clerk explains that she helped work on the resolution. The language in the resolution is not all-inclusive because in the preamble it states “included, but not limited to.” It was citing the elements in the Constitution and it is unlikely that LGBTQ was contemplated in the 1700s when the Constitution was written More importantly, relative to the question as to why the resolution does not address the cooption of the taskforce – adding that perhaps either Corporation Counsel Dan Ryan or General Counsel Brig Smith should weigh in – this resolution is an opinion, saying that you want to have a taskforce. The resolution now goes to the Office of General Counsels is because, to create the taskforce, the same way that the LGBTQ Advisory Committee was created by ordinance, this becomes the law or governing statute, which is why this has to be divided into two (2) pieces. The Council Clerk also alerts the Council to the time: it is now 6:21 PM, leaving about 19 minutes to the scheduled budget meeting. At 7:00 PM.

Councilman Loffredo states that the other question, raised in the original proposed ordinance. The Council Clerk replies that at the June 1st Council meeting they considered a resolution, not an ordinance. To date, there has been no proposed ordinance. Councilman Loffredo replies that this is exactly what the Council is now considering: a substitute resolution. In the original discussion as to the membership composition, he asks if the Council is ready to make any action this evening or is no action needed since they will utilize appointees from existing committees and commissions. He adds that this is what he is asking.

The Chair replies that he not making any appointments at this time. The composition has not been put forward as part of this item. That is something that he is working on and will work on with the Council and the public prior to the next meeting to establish that group. It is his belief that setting priorities and setting an agenda with the pubic is an important element of this work and will help dictate the types of backgrounds of people for membership on this committee. They want to be sure it takes place as part of establishing the commission.

The Chair asks if there is any further discussion.

Councilman Loffredo asks if the Council is planning to take up this friendly amendment or is the consensus at this point.

The Chair asks if there is a second on Councilman Loffredo’s motion.

Councilman Loffredo interjects, saying that he moved this amendment and asks if it seconded. It is up to the Council to acknowledge this as a friendly amendment or not at this time.

Councilman Philip Pessina replies that, at this time, the Council should not entertain Councilman Loffredo’s motion. There was an explanation. As far as he knows, the ordinance, which will spin off of this resolution will establish the makeup of the commission based on the Mayor’s recommendation. So that when the ordinance is in front of the Council, it will fully explain that makeup and how I will be put together. Getting back to Councilman Loffredo’s motion, respectfully, noting that he is a member of the LGBTQ+ Advisory Board, he appreciates the motion and it will be defines later. At this time, he says “no” to the proposed friendly amendment.

Councilman Loffredo replies that it is “no” at this time, asking if that is correct.

Councilman Pessina reiterates, “Yes.”

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell

Councilwoman Blackwell states that she concurs with Councilman Pessina: it is “no” at this time.

The Chair asks if there is any further discussion.

The Chair calls on Corporation Counsel Daniel Ryan.

Corporation Counsel Ryan asks whether or not Councilman Loffredo is dropping his friendly amendment at this time so that they need not vote.

Councilman Loffredo replies that is correct, adding that it was not accepted by the maker of the underlying motion or the seconder, so yes. It is dropped.

The Chair thanks Councilman Loffredo for raising that question, noting that it is certainly to be considered by this Council as well as others. The Chair asks if there is any further discussion. There being none, the Chair calls for a roll call vote, asking the Council Clerk to read the roll:

Councilwoman Blackwell	aye
Councilwoman Carta	aye
Councilman Faulkner	aye
Councilman Darnell Ford	aye
Councilman Edward Ford	aye
Councilman Gennaro	aye
Councilman Loffredo	aye
Councilman Mangiafico	aye
Councilman McKeon	aye
Councilman Nocera	aye
Councilman Pessina	aye
Councilwoman Salafia	aye

The Chair states that the resolution is approved unanimously with 12 aye votes (Councilmembers Blackwell, Carta, Faulkner, D. Ford, E. Ford, Gennaro, Loffredo, Mangiafico, McKeon, Nocera, Pessina, and Salafia). The Chair states the matter is approved.

The Chair thanks everyone for their support. He notes that Councilman Mangiafico said it very well when he said that – adding that we may pat ourselves on the back a little bit -- this is an historic moment. As Councilman Mangiafico pointed out, the work lies ahead. The Chair is very excited, reiterating that this is a big moment, he looks forward to working with all of the Councilmembers to make sure that they meet that moment.

7. Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell moves to adjourn. Councilman Edward Ford, Jr. seconds the motion.

There being no discussion, the Chair calls for a vote. The motion to adjourn is unanimously approved by voice vote with 12 aye votes (Councilmembers Blackwell, Carta, Faulkner, D. Ford, E. Ford, Gennaro, Loffredo, Mangiafico, McKeon, Nocera, Pessina, and Salafia). The motion to adjourn is approved.

The Chair declares that the meeting is adjourned at 6:47 PM.

ATTEST:

LINDA S.K. REED,
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK

K: review/ minutes/ 20 June 11 – special meeting anti-racism taskforce – 11June 2020