

MINUTES

4/16/21 at 4 pm

Racial Harassment Response Research

HCOREI sub-committee

Present: Pat Autilio, Michelle Boleski, Ann Raynolds;

John Hall unable to attend at last minute.

1. Discussion of Mission statement which may be requested at 5/5 HCOREI meeting: *"The Racial Harassment Response Research sub-committee will collect information on the tracking of racial harassment, abuse, and threats as well as potential hate crimes. The research will focus primarily on Hartford and how this information links to other governmental agencies in Vermont. If there are appropriate recommendations, they will be brought to HCOREI."*

2. Reports:

a. Pat reported on information about SPLC-identified anti-government groups and militias in Vermont reported in the Valley News 10/29/20: *"There are four anti-government groups identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center in Vermont: American Patriots, United Patriots Front, Green Mountain Militia and The Three Percenters."*

Elsewhere in the article, there is a mention of WRJ's own militia.

"Another local group, the Vermont State Militia, is based in White River Junction, and was founded by Jesse Gramling, Mike Shumway and Sammi Shumway in 2019 as an alternative to the national organizations. Gramling said at one point the militia had 200 members, but now has 40 to 50 members who are dedicated to defending the Vermont Constitution, which includes a provision protecting the right to bear arms for self-defense and the state.

Gramling lauded Banyai (of the Slate Ridge Pawlet militia) for his expertise and says Banyai is a National Rifle Association certified trainer who has held vehicle assault, introduction to pistol shooting and range safety officer classes. The courses, he says, "are very prefaced on reality," and the facility, which includes two shooting ranges and a

schoolhouse, are “unbelievably safe,” exceeding federal standards, he says. In addition to militia members, Slate Ridge trains people who are seeking security work, ”

b. Michelle reported on social media -- not much to report currently.

c. Ann reported on meeting she and John will have with Chief Vail to introduce him to intentions and plan for both Town Policy and RFRR sub-committees' work.

3. FIP State Police meeting. Ann and Pat are on this and Michelle interested in joining, so sent her invite.

4. To do list for next meeting which we will not schedule until contact John to assure his availability:

Ann to check with Human Rights Commission on their part in collecting data;

Pat to check on Civil Rights division of the Attorney Generals office;

Michelle will look into a Vermont group "Exposing Statewide Racists" to understand what they do and continue to monitor local social media platforms.

Meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm