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BELMONT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes, Meeting of June 1, 2017

HRC Members: Anthony Moroso, chair; Barbara Watson; Fran Yuan; Carl Brauer; Paul Solomon; Nan Donald
Belmont High School Liaison: Jia Zhang
Belmont Against Racism Liaison: Kathryn Bonfiglio
Belmont Police Department Liaison: Captain J. Peter Hoerr

1. Meeting called to order at approximately 7:08 p.m.
2. Minutes of May 4 meeting approved pending corrections of typos by Carl.
3. Organization: Discussion was held regarding designating a minute taker and submitter. The consensus was that maintaining a rotation of these duties in combination with monitoring of the email correspondence and phone line as currently practiced was the best option and should continue. These duties begin on the first Thursday of every month and extend through the first Wednesday of every month. The assigned minute taker will be responsible for making any corrections and submitting approved minutes to the Town Clerk.
4. Carl reported no calls on phone line for May; Nan will cover hot-line in June, Mirela in July, Anthony in August, and Seneca in September. E-mail correspondence was monitored intermittently during May with nothing of significance to report.
5. Anthony has requested an official town email address for the Human Rights Commission and is waiting for follow-up by the town's IT department.
6. The Welcoming Town Citizen Petition which was passed by a vote of 158-59 at the May 8th Town Meeting was briefly discussed. The BHRC had given a recommendation of favorable action on the motion under Article 10.
7. The annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace was held May 14th despite rainy weather, which had some impact on attendance.
8. BHRC co-sponsored a presentation and panel on Homelessness and LGBTQ Youth with the Belmont Gay Straight Alliance Committee on May 30 at the Belmont Library. It was attended by approximately 30 people. The Library was recognized for having done a great job of publicizing the event, which among other things, highlighted how the LGBTQ community was disproportionately impacted by homelessness.
9. Members of the BHRC staffed a table at the May 20th Belmont Town Day and distributed information about the Human Rights Commission.
10. Anthony submitted an article to the Belmont Citizen soliciting new membership on the Commission, which was published online Friday, May 12th. The article appeared subsequently in the printed newspaper.
11. The annual Meet Belmont event will take place August 29th from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Chenery School. The history of the event was briefly discussed and BHRC volunteers to

staff an information table were solicited. Fran committed to staffing the table, and Jia and Anthony tentatively agreed to attend, schedules permitting. The BHRC is looking for additional volunteers.

12. Materials on Race Amity Day were distributed and briefly discussed. Race Amity Day is an officially recognized day in Massachusetts, established by H. 2745, Chapter 163 of Acts of 2015 that states Race Amity Day is to be observed annually in the cities and towns of the Commonwealth on the second Sunday of June. A Metro Boston Race Amity Festival is scheduled for Sunday, June 11th, 1-5:00 p.m. at the Rose Kennedy Greenway, across from the Aquarium.

Race Amity Day was created to affirm and give witness to celebrate racial, cultural and religious diversity in the spirit of real unity.

13. Ways to raise awareness of the Human Rights Commission was discussed, along with brainstorming about possible activities. Increasing the BHRC's social media presence was brought up. Activities under consideration included hosting speakers and films, and possibly musical events. Carl suggested beginning by hosting a showing of "13th" a Netflix documentary about the high rate of incarceration in the United States. He and Anthony will look into the logistics of presenting the documentary. Jia suggested a screening of the Academy Award nominated documentary "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" The documentary recounts the brutal 1982 murder of a 21-year old Chinese-American man that has been credited with igniting a national Asian-American civil rights movement.
14. Several potential speakers for the 2018 Martin Luther King Day breakfast were suggested. More suggestions for speakers would be welcomed.
15. Jia and Kathryn reported on an incident regarding a racial slur comment posted by a non-Belmont student on Snap Chat May 25th that was forwarded to members of the student group Black in Belmont. Discussions with students and faculty on May 26th culminated in a decision to hold a voluntary march around the pond to send a message of solidarity and unity and to affirm that such messages and behavior are not tolerated by the Belmont High School community. A half hour march was held later that day that included Belmont High School students, faculty, staff, as well as representatives of Belmont Against Racism and the Belmont Police Department.
16. Kathryn reported that BAR has gained a new board members and a new Metco family member liaison. BAR recently met with Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias to discuss the Metco transportation Fund and other BAR activities, as well as the current efforts of the Belmont School Department regarding bridging the achievement gap. Kathryn also reported an incident regarding a swastika and a racial epithet that was scratched onto a wall off the bike path on the Cambridge side near Hillside, and noted that there has been an upsurge nationally in hate-related incidents. The Cambridge police were notified, as was the ACLU.
17. Captain Hoerr reported an incident on Washington Street where a car had left the road and travelled across a front yard, knocking down two yard signs, one a campaign sign for Hillary Clinton/Tim Kaine and the other a sign welcoming immigrants as neighbors. Captain Hoerr also updated those in attendance on recent developments concerning the Tamir Rice case and on a recent Belmont Citizen-Herald story about retired Belmont Police Detective Sergeant Barry Ward.
18. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by Nan Donald, recording secretary for this meeting