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Draft- Belmont Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 5, 2017
Beech Street Center, Conference Room

Present:

HRC members: Tony Moroso: Chair; Kayta Gajdos; Seneca Hart; Paul Solomon; Fran Yuan; Carl Brauer; Kathryn Bonfiglio and Meg Anderson (BAR); and Captain. J. Peter Hoerr (BPD).

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM.
2. The minutes of the November 2, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously, as amended.
3. Report on phone-line and e-mail correspondence: Sarah Tang called regarding World Unity. Tony Moroso was apprised of the message soliciting the HRC and did some research as to their mission. He will follow up with Sarah and report back at a later time. Raouf Jacob called regarding the Global Cinema Film Festival and an HRC sponsorship. Questions were raised as to whether or not the HRC should sponsor, Fran stated she will gather more information and report back before ny vote is taken.

4. Assignment of responsibility for minute taker and checking e-mail and phone line contacts:

December- Kayta;
January- Sandi;
February- Sue; and
March- Carl.

Carl stated he cannot attend the March meeting and requested a change to the assignment. Tony stated he will move Carl's assignment.

5. Fran reported on contacting Emily Reardon at the library regarding the Book Talk with author Gish Jen. There may be a fee for Gish Jen to attend. This writer's fee may be \$2,000, but may come at a lesser fee to sell her books, particularly, *The Girl in the Baggage Claim*. Fran will negotiate with Gish Jen regarding fees, Kathryn will look into funding from BAR. Fran may contact the Chinese American Association in Belmont to gauge their interest in promoting Gish Jen's book for One Book, One Belmont.
6. 2018 MLK Breakfast updates:
 - Byron Rushing has been confirmed to speak at the MLK Breakfast.
 - Tony Moroso reached out to administrators from the public school system, police department and the Town's publicly elected officials to confirm attendance and offer speaking roles to those that have spoken at past breakfasts.
 - Black in Belmont teens are getting lots of requests to speak, it was noted.
 - A discussion about conveners for the 2018 breakfast was had. The League of Women Voters, Belmont Republican and Belmont Democratic Committees will be contacted about being conveners.

Programming:

- Barbara e-mailed that the chamber singers will do three songs: National Anthem, Lift Every Voice and Sing, and one other. Seneca Hart mentioned that it mattered “which other” song would be sung because one is quite long—*My God Is a Rock* versus *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*.
- Diane Wiltshire has posted to the list-serve in search of performers and it was reported that no METCO students have responded yet.
- Tony asked the commission if it should keep the entertainment to the three pieces that that have been confirmed.
- It was discussed and decided that Byron Rushing should speak twenty minutes with Q&A after. Kathryn noted the need to time out the program and asked if Mr. Rushing could provide a theme for his speech. Tony stated he would reach out to Mr. Rushing and report back.
- Fran solicited Rev. Gary Richards of the United Methodist Church to lead the opening prayer as in the past. Fran will ask another clergy person to deliver a prayer, possibly from the Church of Latter Day Saints.
- Kathryn designed a flyer mockup and is handling the EventBrite setup for tickets. A discussion was had about the price of admission for tickets purchased online and at the door. It was agreed that they should be the same.
- Tony created a spreadsheet indicating who is responsible for what part of publicity. He will provide all with Byron Rushing’s bio and photo when it is received.

Logistics:

- Fran said Barbara took care of the tables and will provide Tony with more information. Tony said he would try and arrange a meeting with the custodian and tech department ahead of the MLK breakfast.
- Carl noted that last year, they had problems getting into the kitchen because there were other events going on and the custodian was busy. He suggested checking with the custodian regarding his schedule on the day of set up.
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- Fran reported the food has been ordered and Carl will pick it up. Fran stated that Alice Melinkoff of Community Services will find volunteers to help with the food. Meanwhile Fran will meet with Dustin O’Brian, the food handler at Belmont HS.

Other issues:

- Tony will re-contact Melissa Hart to arrange for child care in the gym.
 - The cost for sign language volunteers will be billed to BAR, to be reimbursed by the Disability Access Commission.
 - The CART program will be investigated further and developments will be reported back.
7. Fran initiated a discussion about a question brought up at the last BAR meeting, whether incidents documented by HRC over the year should be compiled in a year-end report. Tony said that only that which was discussed in the HRC meetings would be pertinent to such a report.
 8. Liaison Reports:

- Belmont High School:

Seneca Hart reported that Lila Perl, a Holocaust survivor and author of *Four Perfect Pebbles* spoke at Belmont HS. Students were receptive and it was “impactful for all.”

- BAR Report:

Kathryn Bonfiglio talked about the movie event, *Thirteenth*. She would like to see it shown again.

- Belmont Police Department:

Captain Hoerr said there was an incident that, in his judgment was “not a bias crime worthy of discussion.” Instead of exacerbating and intensifying the issues between the two tenants in question by calling it bias, the Captain will speak directly to both people. He noted that there is a protocol to use to establish whether an incident is biased or not. Fran noted how last year she also took action by talking to people.

9. The talk on Explaining Mental Health, sponsored by Community Mental Health Network on December 11, 2017 was mentioned and attendance encouraged.
10. It was mentioned that the Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra showcasing African-American composers during Black History month will occur

Respectfully submitted,
Kayta Gajdos
Secretary Pro Tem