

**Belmont Human Rights Commission
Minutes
October 18, 2004**

The meeting was called to order by Interim Chairman William Rudman. Present were: Bannon, Heron, McCants, Reynolds, Toureilles, Witten, Yuan. Absent were: Barry, Feins, Shestakofsky. Also present was one visitor.

Minutes of October 5, 2004 meeting read and approved.

1. The next two meeting times were established as Nov. 4th and 15th. At some point in the future, we will meet monthly. Members were asked to e-mail Bill Rudman to indicate the days of the month that they are not available to meet on a monthly basis.
2. Bill Rudman indicated he did not want to serve as the permanent chairperson but will continue as interim chair. Cynthia. Bannon also declined to serve as chairperson. Others who do not wish to be considered for chairperson should let Bill Rudman know. A main criteria for serving as chairperson is regular attendance at monthly meetings.
3. Cynthia Bannon and Maria Toureilles did not receive a copy of the Medford Human Rights Commission Procedures. Bill Rudman. will ask Sandy Curro to send this to them.
4. Bill Rudman asked for agenda items to be forwarded to him for future meetings.
5. Cynthia Bannon will contact the Board of Health to find out what system is in place for administering flu shots. She emphasized a need to look for those who most need it and wishes to insure that shots are not denied to anyone needing them.
6. Bill Rudman reported that Kathryn Bonfiglio of the Martin Luther King Breakfast Planning Committee invites the HRC to make an introduction of the commission at the breakfast on Monday, January 17, 2005. Bill Rudman will ask Steve Shestakofsky to contact Kathryn about our interest in doing this.
7. Maria Toureilles made the point that we very much need to deal with issues within HRC first. Several points were made:
 - Insensitive statements need to be dealt with constructively, by saying: "That
was insensitive" and explaining why it was insensitive.

- Disagreements are going to happen.
- We need to develop guidelines for communication within the group.

The following guidelines were developed:

1. Everyone's opinions and experiences are valid and should be valued
and respected. All members need to feel safe to express what they want to say.
2. It's alright to disagree.
3. There should be no blame, shame, or attack.
4. Avoid labeling one another.
5. Use "I statement" when communicating.
6. Members will take personal responsibility to use and follow these guidelines.

8. DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN Discussion:

a) Questions: Do we need further training? Where do we go now?

b) Need to address gaps in the HRC charge. On page 5 of the Working Outline

for Developing and Implementing a Diversity Action Plan hand-outs outlining HRC charge, we need to add education and business. The first bulleted item will now read: "Address the full range of discrimination in all areas of Belmont life, including but not limited to education, commerce, public accommodation, housing, employment, and access to municipal services."

A MOTION was passed for Bill Rudman to forward this change to the Selectmen.

c) Need to define issues and conduct a needs assessment in the community.

- Rationale: Buy-in from community, positive message about our work,
get input from community, help us prioritize our goals.

Questionnaire:

- Distribute questionnaire to diverse population, anonymous return

