



**Belmont Human Rights Commission  
Belmont Town Hall  
November 5, 2009**

**Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Lisa Bernt, Carl Brauer, Julie Stanley-Cicalese, Nan Donald, Chuck Laverty,  
Laura Panos, Paul Solomon, Connie Williams, Fran Yuan  
Members Absent: None  
Liaisons Present: Kathryn Bonfiglio, Belmont Against Racism  
Community Members: John Vercellone

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm

- The October 3 meeting minutes were accepted as corrected.
- 2. Julie will answer the phone line in November.
- Laura reported on one call on the HRC phone line. A man reported that he felt he was the victim of housing discrimination. However, he would not go into details. He reported that he had given information to Harvard Legal Aid already but that they had not been good to him. He indicated he lived at Waverly Woods but then said he'd lived there for 20 years.

It was agreed that Laura would call him again and suggest he contact MCAD. Discussion ensued regarding our role in supporting complainants as they connect with appropriate resources. In some cases, interpretive services are needed.

- Lisa reported on her attendance at October's MAHRC meeting, which included discussing the booklet "What every immigrant needs to know" (Intercambio, Boulder, CO). Also, a representative from the Census Bureau presented the 2010 Census process. There is concern that Massachusetts could lose a seat in Congress due to a loss of

population. A big effort towards outreach is being made to ensure getting an accurate count. Lisa will email MAHRC meeting minutes to HRC members.

- Fran brought HRC flyers to be distributed around town as follows: Fran (library); Waverly Square, Town Hall, Belmont Center, laundromats (Julie); Cushing Sq. (Chuck); Connelly's area (Nan); Media Center (Laura); and Senior Center (Paul).

d Laura contacted the town website manager and some possible links were proposed: MCAD, Disability Law Center, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Disabled Persons Protection Committee to start. She will follow up on this.

Laura also made contact with Nava Niv-Vogel at the Senior Center and was asked to present something in January, February, or March. She will talk with Nava about what topics would be helpful to seniors, perhaps a housing workshop and/or age discrimination in employment. She proposed it would be helpful to put together a FAQ. This could also appear on the HRC webpage. In addition, Fran agreed to work on a protocol for answering phone calls.

6. A fair housing forum will be held on November 19<sup>th</sup> in Medford. Lisa, Laura, and possibly Fran plan to attend. There is also a disability workshop the same day. Lisa will forward members information about this.

7. The Census Bureau wishes to partner with communities to ensure a higher rate of response to census surveys. It would also be helpful for other community groups to be invited to our next meeting when someone from the Census Bureau will come to present what is needed for partnering with them. Fran agreed to generate a list of target organizations to invite, including the schools, and send out invitations to attend our next meeting. The library, town hall, and one church have been contacted already by the bureau. It was agreed that a person from the Census Bureau could attend our December meeting.

e Laura Maslow-Armand of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law was the speaker. She was a race relations professor in France and is now a lawyer. She has been a staff attorney at the Lawyer's Committee for six years. She also worked in the Attorney General's office in the Civil Rights and Public Charities divisions.

Ms. M-A works part-time at Mass. General Hospital Health Center in Chelsea, helping patient families with simple legal matters – welfare, disability benefits, and public housing cases. She detailed the many groups of people with which she has dealt.

Ms. M-A described the Lawyer's Committee work to be mainly in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, and police misconduct. The Committee works with private law firm members who are on the board. Law firms provide paid law interns to work on their cases. She described two cases on which she is now working. The first involves a race discrimination case against the Boston Police Dept. who fired 10 officers on the basis of drug testing of the hair. The second case involves legal action against the Boston University Biolab due to its location in an already-stressed neighborhood. Ms. Maslow-Armand invited the HRC to refer any appropriate cases.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Yuan