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Belmont Human Rights Commission
Belmont Town Hall, Conference Room 1
December 1, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Members in attendance: Fran Yuan, Chair, Carl Brauer, Paul Solomon, Pallavi Khare, Nan Donald
Absent members: Jirair Hovsepian, Regina O'Brien, Julie Cicalese
Belmont Police Liaison: Captain Peter Hoerr
Belmont Against Racism Liaison: Kathryn Bonfiglio
Prospective member: Barbara Watson

Old Business

1. November Minutes. The Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2011 were accepted as amended.

2. Phone Line Report and Assignment. There was nothing to report on the phone line. Nan will staff the phone line for December.

3. The Many Faces of Beech Street Center video project. Fran Yuan reported that this project, which is intended to highlight the diversity of our seniors and teams volunteers from the senior center with volunteer interviewers from the Belmont High School, is moving along. Currently there are 4 student interviewers, but with scheduling issues and approximately 12 seniors to be interviewed, additional BHS volunteers would be helpful. Jirair Hovsepian, Cal Johnson and Fran Yuan have volunteered to do the videotaping. The interviews are taking place at the Beech Street Center during its normal hours; the center closes most days at 4 pm, but is open on Tuesdays until 7 pm. The center will be open during the high school's December vacation.

4. The Beech Street Center Diversity Training. The center has had the first phase of its diversity training for staff and volunteers. This training was arranged at the suggestion of the Center by the BHRC and funded by Belmont Against Racism (BAR). The second 2 hour session will take place on Friday, December 9, 2011 from 9 to 11 am.

5. "Lost in Detention", the Frontline documentary recently aired on PBS was discussed as the potential subject of a BHRC program. **All members are asked to view the documentary which is available on-line (search Lost in Detention Frontline PBS) prior to the next meeting on January 5, 2012.** The documentary sheds light on the deportation process for the undocumented, including issues presented to the law enforcement community, undocumented immigrant community and community at large as a result of the implementation of the federal Secure Communities program, which results in notification of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency of all arrests. The documentary highlights the negative impact of the law on families where parents, who are considered no threat to the community, are separated from families; abuse of detainees in a detention facility; and, the limited rights of individuals detained, as well as the limited rights of detainees. A discussion took place relative how a program relative to the documentary relates to the Commission's role and the community and it was commented

that as the BHRC focuses on diversity within the community and provides an educational role on diversity and human rights issues that providing a forum for the community to view and discuss the film as a group would be an appropriate service. The First Church has had several panels on immigration and Fran volunteered to contact the Church to discuss how the film might be presented in a program, with a possible goal of March for a program.

6. Featuring Diversity on the Town Website. Fran and Carl talked to town officials about the possibility of having pictures of people on the Town webpage in addition to having Town buildings. It is thought that having the diverse faces of Belmont in addition to the buildings would be more welcoming. There may be a space (the small gray box on the home page) where this change may be able to happen. Fran will speak to the Board of Selectmen.

New Business

7. Brainstorming. The group discussed possible approaches to future programming, including having community programming scheduled at regularly scheduled commission meetings and annual programming.

8. Chair for January 5th Meeting. Carl Brauer will chair the January meeting.

9. Martin Luther King Community Breakfast, Monday, January 16, 2012, BHS cafeteria. Kathryn Bonfiglio reported on the Belmont Against Racism's upcoming annual breakfast. Complete information can be found on BAR's webpage. This year's guest speaker will be WGBH Radio and TV host Callie Crossley who will speak on "Out of the Mountain of Despair a Stone of Hope." Award winning Slam Poet and former BHRC member Regie Gibson will perform. BHRC is a cosponsor of the event and volunteers are needed on Sunday the 15th from 5 to 6 pm and on the morning of the breakfast, starting with the 8:30 am registration. Daycare, including Mr. S, for entertaining the older children, will be provided. Please see the BAR website for further information and to volunteer.

10. One Book One Belmont. Carl Brauer who is representing BHRC on the One Book committee reported that a book has not been chosen yet. The committee is juggling an appropriate book and availability of the speaker, including speaker cost.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Watson

Next Commission Meeting: January 5, 2012, 7:00 pm