



**Belmont Human Rights Commission
Belmont Town Hall
December 3, 2009**

Meeting Notes

Members Present: Lisa Bernt, Julie Cicalese, Chuck Laverty, Paul Solomon, Connie Williams, Fran Yuan

Members Absent: Carl Brauer, Nan Donald, Laura Panos

Liaisons Present: Captain Peter Hoerr (Belmont Police Department); Kathryn Bonfiglio (BAR)

Members of the Public Present: John Vercellone; Anna Whitcomb, League of Women Voters, Christian Schiavone of Belmont Citizen Herald; Scott Stratford, and others.

Meeting convened at 7:10 pm.

Fran Yuan took notes.

- The November meeting minutes were unanimously accepted.
- One call was reported on the phone line. This was from a caller who had called previously with landlord complaints. She reported that she is moving to another apartment in January.
 - Members reported disseminating HRC brochures to different sites in town. We should have something in the local newspaper as well.
 - Housing Forum in November: Lisa couldn't go, but Laura, who wasn't in attendance, may have.
 - Capt. Hoerr reported on an on-going dispute between two families, in which racial epithets and threats of violence were used. The victim is reportedly only at the home periodically. These events took place in October.

Another incident involved an antisemitic text message sent to a Jewish adult by a Jewish juvenile known to the victim. It is possible that Capt. Hoerr may apply for a juvenile criminal complaint after checking his past record. The victim is not reportedly in fear, and the parents of the juvenile are addressing the issue.

3 Kathryn reported that Belmont Against Racism continues to provide support to students and their families around school issues. The MLK Breakfast will be moved to the Chenery Middle School, with food being served in the cafeteria and the program taking place in the auditorium. The speaker will be Pineal Joseph. She also mentioned that Dick Lehr would be speaking about his book, *The Fence*, which addresses the Boston police cover-up in the beating of a black police officer.

- Fran agreed to order a copy of *What Every Immigrant Needs to Know* from Intercambio.
- Samer Balbaky, from U.S. Census 2010, spoke. He reported that he is responsible for six towns, including Belmont and is looking to partner with community organizations. He emphasized that the Census is safe with data being protected by Chapter 13, Section 9, of their Data Collection and Privacy Policy, keeping any other group from gaining access to the information collected. Information is never made public with names, but it can be requested a certain time later, 70 years perhaps.

There are certain hard-to-count groups within the community, with a history of not returning census forms. These might include people who are foreign-born, some undocumented. The form consists of 10 questions on a short-version. The long-version is given to certain people, though this year only the short-version will be used. It takes less than 10 minutes to fill out. The American Community Survey is done on a yearly basis with a smaller sample, which provides other demographic information sometimes cited. Personal information might consist of name (to avoid duplication), date of birth, race, and address, but social security number is not collected. If forms are not returned, census workers come door to door. This can be costly.

Samer emphasized that the census is important because decisions are based on the data collected. Community development money, \$400 billion, is allocated based on data. Elderly housing, schools, new hospitals, and roads may be funded in part due to census data information. Also the number of congressional seats is based on this data and MA is at risk of losing one congressional seat due to population decrease.

Forms will be sent out in mid-March to be sent back by April 1, Census Day. There will be centers requested by the community if language help is needed. The form is available in five languages but must be filled out in English. They can be filled out on-line, on own, or at a center. Last census, 65% were returned by mail. \$10 million is spent to get back each 1% after that.

Samer asked how we could publicize the census. Suggestions were PSA on TV, large electronic sign, etc. Others suggested the Korean church, Belmont Food Pantry, etc. The homeless are counted in shelters and outdoors, visually during a week in April. There will be temporary jobs with the census from 20-40 hours a week. These enumerator jobs will be nights and weekends and will be posted on the census website. You must be at least 18 and an American citizen.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 pm.

