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Belmont Human Rights Commission
Belmont Town Hall, Conference Room 2
Wednesday, March 7, 2013
7pm

Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance: Carl Brauer, Barbara Watson, Julie Cicalese, Regina O'Brien, Rachel Rennard, Paul Solomon

Belmont High School Liaison: Daniel Vernick

Belmont Police Liaison: Cpt. Peter Hoerr

Belmont Against Racism (BAR): Jonathan Jacoby (Co-President), Kathryn Bonfiglio

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:02pm.

February 13th Meeting Minutes: Paul moved to accept the minutes, Julie seconded. All in favor.

Phone Line Report and Assignments:

- February: Regina had nothing to report.
- March: BAR received a vague complaint that someone was being "improperly evicted" from Waverly Woods; Barbara followed up with the Housing Authority and was able to direct the individual to a free legal service in Cambridge.
- April: Rachel scheduled.
- May: Daniel scheduled.

Social Media Use: Regina reported that she spoke with Robert Reardon, Jr., regarding the Commission's potential use of social media. He shared that while we would not be able to use commercially available social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), there may be an opportunity to utilize a potential town-run social media network that is being investigated and planned. Robert shared that the roll-out of a town-run social media network is targeted for the next year. In the interim, we discussed having a town-sponsored email address for the Commission and/or being added to the "Contact Us" form. Due to operational challenges that were shared, the commission has been instructed to have an email address that could be included on the website that people could click on and communicate with the commission via email. Regina has created a gmail account (belmont.hrc@gmail.com) for this use and will share that with Robert to post on the website. Instructions on how to log in and check the email will be shared with the group through an update of the phone hotline instructions.

Belmont Against Racism MLK Breakfast: Kathryn recapped the history of the breakfast, including themes of the event over the years. As a fundraiser, it is used to provide funds for After-School Transportation for Metco students. Jonathan shared his perspective regarding coordination and operations of the event, and that BAR is prepared to cover the bill for next year's (2014) event and work with HRC members 1:1 on taking on the event assignments. Funds are needed to cover the speaker costs as well as the food; much of the labor is either donated by the Town or made by volunteers. Sometimes instead of paying the speakers directly, BAR donates to a charity of their choice. Speaker costs could go between \$500-1,500. The event should be politically neutral. Understanding the intricacies of the way the Commission could operate the event while still allowing the event to be a main fundraiser for the special programs is important. Money taken in at the door covers expenses (~\$1,100 receipts, ~\$3,100 expenses); contributions that are taken separately go directly to the fund. Paul shared that he does not think it should be part of our charge to fundraise; discussed the possibilities of having a sub-committee formed specific to this and sponsored by the HRC. BAR is willing to be the "fundraising" arm in 2014.

Actions:

- Kathryn to get a budget report and breakdown from BAR Treasurer to share.
- Barbara to connect with the Assistant Superintendent to understand the funding of the special programs.
- All members to come to the next meeting prepared to say whether they're committed to supporting the event; review the materials shared by BAR and determine which tasks/areas we would like to cover personally. We will vote at the next meeting on whether or not the HRC will take on operational responsibility of the event.

Commemoration of Armenian Genocide:

- Vote to approve that Commission Member Jirair Hovsepian represent the Commission at the April 19, 2013, Commemoration at the Massachusetts State House. Barbara moved, Paul seconded, all in favor.
- Request that Human Rights Commission Request Proclamation from the Board of Selectman. Barbara moved, Carl seconded, all in favor.

Town Website Photo Collage: Barbara contacted the office of the Board of Selectman; no news yet.

Events:

Gospel Concert: Joyful Voices of Inspiration, non-denominational group, will be performing at a concert at the Belmont-Watertown United Methodist Church on March 23rd at 3pm. Fundraiser to benefit the Belmont Food Pantry, Watertown Food Pantry, and St. Patrick's Food Pantry.

Liaison Reports:

Belmont Police:

- Competitive examination for Municipal Police Officer, Transit Police Officer, and State Trooper is open. Cpt. Hoerr requested assistance in providing information to potential applicants during the recruitment campaign to help recruit a diverse applicant pool.
- Email to the police department from a woman that shared that she believed her daughter was racially profiled during an altercation with a Belmont Police Officer. Cpt. Hoerr shared that an investigation is underway, and that he expects to have a report at the next meeting.

BAR: No additional news.

Adjourned: Paul moved to adjourn the meeting, Barbara seconded, all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Next Meeting: April 4, 2013 at 7pm

Respectfully submitted by Regina O'Brien