



Belmont Human Rights Commission

Belmont Town Hall
May 6, 2010

Meeting Notes

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

Members Absent: Laura Panos

Liaisons Present: Kathryn Bonfiglio (Belmont Against Racism)
Captain Peter Hoerr (Belmont Police Department)

Meeting convened at 7:05 pm.

- The April minutes were passed unanimously as amended.
- Fran described a tenant complaint referred through Bev Freeman about discrimination in Section 8 housing. The complainant was moving the next day. No intervention was requested.
- 2 Bullying and cyber-bullying were discussed. A PTO meeting at the Chenery Middle School provided information about websites and gave parents info. about how to secure computers, how technology is used (how children get sucked in, how to make them tech savvy), and the developmental level at which kids should be im-ing, entering chat room, and using facebook. 'Children on line.org' was recommended as a website that provides information about technology and children and has a newsletter. The fall bullying program has been put off. BAR will continue to talk to PTO.
- Lisa reported that Rita McNally had ideas at the MAHRC meeting. New anti-bullying laws will be in effect, 90 days after passed. This might be an opportunity to do a presentation on what this new law means. Julie mentioned there is a website, stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov that is geared to parents and educators. Lisa suggested we compile resources. Julie said she would work on an article geared towards parents. Kathryn offered that she could help access PTOs. It would be helpful to know what each school is doing and putting out. Kathryn says there are many different viewpoints on how to deal with bullying, some of which suggest focusing on bystanders. Fran suggested schools put this information on their web pages.
- Nan and Fran are asking to be reappointed this year.

- d Lisa is stepping down as co-chair and will not be here at next month's meeting. She is still willing to go to monthly MAHRC meetings.
- e Fran passed out the 10 main changes to the open meeting law.
- 7 Town Day will be on May 22. Julie and Connie volunteered to possibly be at a table from 10-2 pm. Paul will try to get a table we can share free of charge. We also agreed that we will try to have a table Meet Belmont in August and decide once we get a date.
- 8 People got invitations to the ice cream social with an incorrect date. It was uncertain who sent it out.
 - Fran suggested we all read a book over the summer to talk about. The book "It's the little things" had previously been mentioned. Julie has heard the author, Lena Williams, speak. No decision was made about this.
 - Both Connie and Carl thought it was important to talk about the current issues around immigration policy. People have to prove their citizenship to get government benefits. We discussed the fact that a lot of people in the MA legislature are in support of this. Kathryn asked about the implications for the police. Peter said that people have to have a social security number to get a driver's license. They can only be stopped for traffic violations, and their status explored if there is a reasonable suspicion. Police have to have a reason to come in contact with the person. There is some concern about the standard of how this is interpreted. Peter agreed it will be hard to deal with. Resident aliens can get social security numbers. Connie suggested it would take time away from other police business. Carl said that sporting events that are to take place in Phoenix may run into problems and that there is a lot of money at stake. The law could get repealed if too much money is forfeited.
- 13. Lisa said that at the MAHRC meeting there was a presentation on repeal of the 40 Fair Housing law. It could go on the ballot or could be challenged. Connie suggested that Judie Feins might be up to date on this. Chuck will find out if Judie can come to speak to us. It will be a hot topic on the November ballot. Lisa says that Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAPA) is countering the attempt to repeal 40B.
- 14. Peter attended a day and a half training sponsored by the Winchester Multicultural Network. He reported that it was very well put together. The two female leaders were very welcoming and challenging people. He found it useful. It was based on the Visions model.

Peter also reported that the draft report of the investigation into a racial profiling complaint against the police is being completed.

He said that the recent death of a young boy because of a fallen tree has caused a lot of stress in the police department. Stress management is offered but what officers saw will continue to have an impact.

He reported that the police will try to intervene on the bottle collecting case brought up last month.

Lisa provided a language card so people could indicate what language they speak.

Nan plans to talk to the pastor of the Haitian church because the festival where noise is an issue will be in June. She also mentioned that in terms of immigration issues, we could have someone from MIRA come to speak to us.

15. Paul asked about what our first purpose is. Are we here to educate ourselves and the public? It was suggested that we find out more about issues in town and how to impact people by holding our meetings at other locations (Beech Street Center; Waverly Woods; Haitian, Korean, and Mormon church –successful in minority communities)

We might also find more diversity to be on our committee if we reach out.

Connie said we have to have a broad view – may not be minority groups, could be veterans who have issues. Chuck mentioned that some veterans have been waiting a long time for housing. Paul said we might do a needs assessment and need to develop programs that give us more visibility. We have been collecting a Supporters list; each person could call someone on the list to gauge interest in becoming involved. We agreed to think about holding our meetings at other venues and what the structure for this would be.

The meeting ended at 8:50 pm.