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## Belmont Human Rights Commission

### Minutes

SEP 23 3 00 PM '04

September 2, 2004

The first meeting of the Commission was called to order by Selectman Solomon. Present were members Bannon, Barry, Feins, McCants, Reynolds, Rudman, Shestakofsky, and Turreilles. Rudman was selected as interim chairman. Dr. Solomon gave initial guidance and each member then introduced him/herself.

Town Counsel Letter: The Commission discussed the letter from Town Counsel which cast doubt on the Commission's ability to mediate or investigate, directly impacting two elements of the Selectmen's Charge to the Commission, namely:

- Assist the citizenry and Town agencies in informally resolving disputes on issues relating to discrimination.
- Receive and investigate allegations of discrimination against individuals protected under the Massachusetts Human Rights Law and related legislation, issue findings, and refer matters to relevant Town, State, and Federal agencies for disposition of matters within their jurisdiction.

McCants and others observed that other cities' and towns' human rights commissions appear to perform these functions. It was resolved that Rudman, with input from McCants, will draft a letter to the Selectmen requesting clarification and a decision.

Shestakofsky, Reynolds, and Dr. Solomon noted that this issue should not preclude the commission from moving forward in other areas.

Training: Shestakofsky advised that free training for the members was available from various sources and was tasked to gather information on the subject.

Other Issues: Feins will collect information on the open meeting law, especially with respect to E-mail. Reynolds will draft an outline of a "diversity action plan."

Next Meetings: The next two meetings will take place on September 9 and September 21, both at 7pm.

New Charge: Dr. Solomon advised the Commission of a new charge to the Commission: to start a process for promoting diversity with a report to the Selectmen due on February 1, 2005.

