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Belmont Human Rights Commission

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 2, 2014
Belmont Town Hall
Conference Room 1

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:01 pm.

The following were in attendance:
Members: Carl Brauer, Nan Donald, Jirair Hovsepian, Daniel Vernick, Barbara Watson
Liaisons: Captain Peter Hoerr, Belmont Police Department
Belmont Against Racism: Charlene O'Connor
Community Member: Mirela Duda

1. **Members**: The new applicant to the HRC attended the meeting to introduce herself to the Human Rights Commission. She is still waiting for approval by the Selectmen.
2. **Minutes**: The September meeting minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Phone Line/Email**: There was no activity on the phone line or e-mail during the month of September.
   Barbara will answer phone line for October; Daniel for November; and Jerry for December.
4. **MLK Breakfast**:
   Speaker: Barbara reported that WGBH investigative reporter Phillip Martin, has agreed to be the 2015 MLK speaker and will not require an honorarium. Plans are to have him speak for around 25 minutes and then answer questions.
   Registration: Daniel Vernick will handle registration.
   Breakfast Program: Human Rights Commission members will take over the responsibility of designing the MLK program.
   American Sign Language Interpretation: Janet MacDonald of the Disability Access Commission has requested that ASL interpretation be provided. Funds are available to cover the cost of interpreters.
   Recreational Activities for Children: Longtime MLK entertainer Dick Samaria will not be able to entertain the young children as he has for so many years and will be sorely missed. The Human Rights Commission will explore alternate options.
   Student Volunteer Opportunities: Barbara has contacted Belmont High Community Service Coordinator Alice Melinkoff as she would like to see if students would like to take on some leadership roles for the MLK Breakfast. Daniel would mentor students as they learned their responsibilities.
5. **Other activities**:
   The HRC is considering a variety of possible events to sponsor in addition to the annual MLK. A subcommittee with Jerry, Daniel and Barbara will explore possible options.
6. **Town Website**:
   Town Administrator David Kale forwarded correspondence he received to the Commission as it pertained to the Commission's responsibilities.
7. **Liaison Reports**:

Belmont Against Racism: Transportation paid through the Metco Support Fund was utilized at a higher rate last year than previously. Substantial fundraising will be need to take place to meet current needs.
Belmont Police Department: The School Resource Officer position at Belmont High School has been filled after several years of being vacant. The new officer is Melissa O'Connor, a former Belmont High School graduate. Captain Hoerr explained that having an officer at the school gives students an opportunity to get to know a police officer, and gives the police an opportunity to learn of any concerns in the community that students may express, such as domestic violence, sexual assaults and underage drinking.
Belmont High School: The high school held its annual student activities fair September 24. A number of diversity-oriented clubs were represented, including the Feminist Alliance, the Gay-Straight Alliance, the Asian-American Club, the Armenian Club, the Food and Garden Justice Club and the new Diversity Club.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Nan Donald, Recorder