

2015 FEB -5 PM 1:57



*Belmont Human Rights Commission*

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**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 8, 2015**  
**Belmont Town Hall**  
**Conference Room 1**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:10 pm.

The following were in attendance:

**Members:** Carl Brauer, Mirela Duda, Jirair Hovsepian, Paul Solomon, Edie Stringfellow, Daniel Vernick, Barbara Watson, Fran Yuan

**Liaisons:** Belmont Against Racism: Kathryn Bonfiglio; Police Department: Captain Peter Hoerr

**Other Attendees** from Belmont Against Racism: June Roberts, John Robotham, Natalie Stoller

1. December meeting minutes were accepted unanimously with minor corrections.
2. Phone Line: Jerry did not check the phone line in December but said he would check it and continue to do so for the month of January.
3. Mirela was officially appointed as the newest HRC member.
4. MLK Breakfast:
  - a) Registration is being coordinated by Dan and Natalie. She will train him to do the name tags and Barbara proposed he train a student who might take charge after Dan leaves the HRC.
  - b) Dan suggested that applications at the high school be accepted from any student wishing to serve on the HRC so that it is open to everyone.
  - c) Dan reported that pre-registration so far was low at 15. Publicity used to go out before the holidays whereas this time it went out later.
  - d) Fran will contact houses of worship to remind them to put an announcement in their bulletins. She will email Nava Niv-Vogel to post it at the Beech Street Center.
  - e) High school students will post flyers around town.
  - f) Sunday, January 18 from 4-6 pm, people are asked to help with set up of tables at the high school cafeteria. The Belmontian Club will send volunteers but other people might be needed. The Religious Council should be asked to let houses of worship know that people are needed.
  - g) Barbara went over the list of invited guests, including town and state government and school officials, police and fire officials, and school committee members
  - h) In addition to the speaker, Phillip Martin, Sumner McClain will do an MLK remembrance (10 minutes), community choir will perform (3-5 minutes), and Will Brownsberger, on the State Judiciary Committee, will respond to the speaker with work in the state on issues presented (5 minutes). Barbara will put together the program and ask for individual responses to this. Barbara will finalize program and send it around.
  - i) Alice Melnikoff will have volunteers on hand to help in the kitchen and in putting out food.
5. Carl reminded us about A Path Appears, the program that will show on three Mondays in January at 10 pm on PBS. It will also be shown and discussed in Belmont as follows:  
January 26 at St Joseph's with discussion led by Jeffrey Shea, BHS Social Studies teacher and MA Teacher of the Year; February 5 at First Church; and February 12 at Beth El Temple Center. The programs will begin at 6:30 pm on each of these dates.
6. Since one of the above programs conflicts with the next HRC meeting, our February meeting was changed to Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.

7. Fran announced that WGBH will host Nicholas Kristof on January 21<sup>st</sup> with a reception at 6 pm, film and discussion at 7 pm and dessert reception at 8:30. She has some extra free tickets if anyone is interested. Phillip Martin will moderate the discussion.  
She also announced the Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School was presenting a film screening and discussion, Saving St. Louis, on Saturday, January 17 from 1-4 pm. Speakers include Eric Garner's nephew, Police Chief and Mayor of Ferguson, Mo, and other community activists.
8. Captain Hoerr clarified the difference between a choke hold (tracheal) used on Eric Garner and a vascular hold, which was not what was used on Mr. Garner. He checked the video of the event. He also discussed the use of force by police, deadly force separate from the issue of race. He recounted a Montana case. He discussed the question of how much risk police should accept. Officers are taught to stop hostile action. Members had numerous questions including whether ways to disable rather than kill suspects might be developed through new technology.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Submitted by Recorder: Fran Yuan