

Belmont Human Rights Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 2, 2016

Belmont Town Hall, Room 1

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Attendance: Barbara Watson, Carl Brauer, Jirair Hovsepian, Darren Bowmeester, Fran Yuan, Sarah Jane Henman, Mirela Duda, Nan Donald, Jia Zhang
Belmont Police Department: Captain J. Peter Hoerr
Belmont Against Racism: Kathryn Bonfiglio
Belmont Stand Up Campaign: Donna Ruvolo

1. The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:04 pm.
2. The Minutes from the Thursday, May 5, 2016 meeting were accepted.
3. Fran reported that there were no calls into the phone line.
4. The Phone Line and E-mail assignment and minute taker were shared:
June- Darren
September-Carl
October- Nan
Carl might have a conflict with regards to his September Phone and Email Assignment and may try to trade with someone else.
5. Donna Ruvolo of the Stand Up Campaign (SUP) provided a summary and overview of SUP. It was founded this past year around the idea of how we might create a more civil discourse. The official full name of organization is the "The Stand Up Campaign for Kindness, Decency and Civil Discourse." In meetings to date, they've discussed 1) The School "Social and Emotional Learning" curriculum 2) How we can discuss difficult topics 3) How we can break down barriers with our neighbors. SUP has worked closely with Belmont Against Racism (BAR) and is presently looking to have a formal association within BAR. Donna expressed a desire to have the Human Rights Commission act as Co-Sponsor of SUP. Donna welcomed the involvement of the HRC and expressed the hope that the SUP could be a way of advocating for our values as a community.
6. Meeting with the School Superintendent about LGBTQ Concerns at Chenery: Fran and Donna reviewed the meeting with Superintendent Phelan. In the meeting they discussed what could be done to make it easier for LGBTQ teachers and students to be open. Things that were discussed included teacher training, visible rainbow flags and safe spaces.
7. Sponsorship of the Stand Up Campaign: Barbara suggested that if the HRC acted as a sponsor of SUP, we may also want a liaison to that organization. Nan expressed some interest in possibly being the liaison, but also suggested we table any motion to become more formerly involved with SUP pending the finalization of the Campaign's affiliation with BAR. Nan offered a motion to this effect and it was seconded and passed unanimously.
8. The "A Path Appears Jimmy Tingle Fundraising Event" took place on Saturday, May 7, 2016 at 7:30 pm. Carl reported that 300 people attended and that it was a "Great Event." After expenses were paid, \$1,000.00 was raised for METCO, the Food Pantry and the Bristol Lodge.
9. MLK Breakfast, January 16, 2017
Given that BAR was not disbanding, Barbara raised the question of whether BAR would run the breakfast or whether the HRC should continue its sponsorship of the Breakfast. Kathryn said BAR could not assume a full sponsorship of the Breakfast.
 - a. Ayanna Pressley expressed her regrets and will not be able to speak at the coming MLK Breakfast. She might still be a possibility for a future Breakfast.
 - b. Other speaker candidates were discussed, including Annissa Essaibi-George, a Boston City Councilor (suggested by Darren), slam poets (suggested by Jia), Reggie Gibson, a slam poet, Jack Patrick Lewis

from MetroWest who was running for State Rep (suggested by Jia) and Rep. Byron Rushing (by Carl). Captain Hoerr suggested Belmont native Dorothy Stoneman who will be retiring from Youth Build this year.

There was a motion passed unanimously to send an invitation to Dorothy Stoneman as the speaker for the Breakfast. Barbara will send the invitation. If Ms. Stoneman declines, an invitation will be sent to Michelle Wu.

There was also discussion to distribute more of the responsibilities of the Breakfast. Barbara asked if we could have members volunteer for following positions:
Co-Kitchen coordinator (solicit food donations, work with BHS kitchen staff to order food and staff, coordinate food set up, oversee volunteers). Mirela volunteered to be mentored as the Co-Kitchen Coordinator by Fran. Fran was also going to revise her To Do list, so that more people could be involved in the preparation for the Breakfast.

Publicity coordinator (provide list serve announcements to school department/high school, press releases to Citizen Herald, Belmontonian, Belmont Against Racism, Religious Council, METCO program). Nan volunteered to be mentored by Barbara as the Publicity Coordinator.

10. Boston Gay Pride Parade, Saturday, June 11th: Barbara opened a discussion about why it is still important for people to walk in the parade. Fran responded that it's important because some people are still marginalized and afraid. Also when you have a lot of people there, it creates a sense of community.
11. ESL department international picnic at the Butler School, Tuesday, May 24: Barbara briefly mentioned that the picnic was this past week.
12. Liaison Reports:
Belmont High School: We recognized Sarah Jane Henman who will be graduating from Belmont High School. This will be her last meeting.
13. Belmont Against Racism: Kathryn provided an update on BAR. Two speakers spoke on diversity at Chenery. The METCO Chenery bowling party was successful.
14. Belmont Police Department: Captain Hoerr reviewed the use of force training for Belmont police officers.
15. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Darren Bouwmeester

Belmont.hrc@gmail.com

(617) 993-2795

town.belmont-ma.gov