

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of September 05, 2023

Commissioners Present – Rabbi Keith Stern, Cindy Greene, Jane Brown, Tamika Olszewski, William Dain

Commissioners Absent – Rakashi Chand, Maureen Sullivan

Advisory Council Present – Officer Eric Rosenbaum

Student Representatives Present – None

Guests – Hattie Kerwin-Derrick

Staff to the Commission – Shemeka Hill, Linda Walsh

The meeting was called to order by Rabbi Keith Stern at 7:00 pm

1. Introductions
2. Minutes from June 14, 2023, special meeting approved.
3. Newton police report – Officer Rosenbaum
 - One incident involving a community member walking home from a party and was approached by people passing by and comments were made about the community member being trans. Community member unable to identify people, and NPD did canvass the area and were unable to locate anyone. Community member did not want to pursue any further action.
 - One incident involving words being written on a florist shop on Eliot Street. Anti-gay words were scratched onto the door.
 - One incident involving graffiti in a parking garage above Pet Smart on Needham Street. Graffiti was mainly on handicap spaces and was related to down syndrome.
 - One incident involving neighbors on Parker Street. Anti-black comments were used in this incident.
 - One incident involving a swastika being found in an apartment complex on Court Street. Image was located in a common wash area.
 - One incident involving neighbors on Auburn Street. The N-word and other racial comments were used.
4. Complaints received – Shemeka Hill & Linda Walsh
 - Two complaints received via the HRC email. Both complaints were housing related, and both were referred to the MCAD.
 - Discussion and update in response to the vote on the complaint process. HHS department will follow up with Law department about attending next HRC meeting.
5. Student reports –
 - None Received this month
6. Updates from the Mayor’s Office – Hattie Kerwin-Derrick
 - Update on the meeting with BAA, marathon running groups, and NPD.
 - Running groups declined invitation to hold a community run. Requested that Mayor Fuller join the cheer group next year during the marathon.
7. Updates from Commissioners
 - Discussion about programing for 2024. Discussion about possible programing surrounding book banning.
 - Updated meeting dates through June 2024

- Open seat for a HRC commissioner

8. Upcoming Events Announcements

- Annual Commemoration for 9/11 Memorial on Monday, September 11th at the Newton Fire Dept
- Kulanu event on Wednesday, October 11th at the War Memorial

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm

Next meeting will be October 03, 2023, on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Newton Health and Human Services Department