

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of May 07, 2024

Commissioners Present – Rabbi Keith Stern, Jane Brown, Tamika Olszewski, Rakashi Chand, Eliza Spaulding

Commissioners Absent –Cindy Greene

Advisory Council Present – Lt Amanada Henrickson & Officer Eric Rosenbaum

Student Representatives Present – Clio McAneny & Sarina Chand

Guests – Rhiannon Esposito, Julia Dun Rappaport, Meri Haas

Staff to the Commission – Shemeka Hill

The meeting was called to order by Jane Brown at 7:05 pm

1. Introductions
2. Julia Dun Rappaport & Rhiannon Esposito
 - Discussion about Celebration of Queer Culture (CQC)
 - Event Date is June 15, 2024, from 10am-2pm at Newton City Hall (War Memorial Circle)
3. Minutes from April 02, 2024, meeting approved. Minutes from April 30, 2024, mid-month meeting approved.
4. Newton police report – Lt Amanada Henrickson & Officer Eric Rosenbaum
 - One incident on new sidewalk in front of TJ Maxx, with a carving saying, “Free Palestine”. Police report was made, and information was reported to the mayor’s office.
 - One incident of anti-Semitic comments made to a volunteer outside of the Newton Free Library. A report was made to NPD by the library director.
 - Two incidents involving a vehicle riding around the Temple Emanuel with a Palestine flag draped on the side of the vehicle. Driver was beeping and flipping off people in the area. NPD has been trying to locate the operator of the vehicle.
 - Two incidents at Newton South HS involving graffiti. One incident involved writing “From the river to the sea” and the other incident was a swastika.
 - Two incidents at the Newton Free Library involving the Palestinian Art display. One was a van displaying pictures of Hitler and a reference to the mayor and Hitler. The other incident was that a woman in a hijab was called a “terrorist” by another person attending the display.
 - One incident on Homer Street involving vandalism on the flyer board. Bumper sticker that said “End the Israeli Apartheid” was left on the board.
5. Complaints received – Shemeka Hill
 - Three housing related complaints were referred to MCAD.
 - One complaint against the Newton Public School system (NNHS) that was referred to the HR department for the school system.
6. Student reports – Sarina Chand & Clio McAneny
 - Newton South celebrated Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Day
 - No Place for Hate Walk has been changed to March for Unity and will take place on May 23rd
7. Updates from the Mayor’s Office –
 - None received this month
8. Updates from Commissioners
 - Discussion about Arlington HRC listening session information.

- Discussion about inviting Superintendent Anna Nolin to another meeting to discuss issues and ideas that students are getting involved with.
- Discussion about partnering with the Youth Commission to discuss issues and ideas that students are getting involved with.
- Discussion about Pride Flag Raising Event Honoree. Nominees that have been received have been honored in the past. Ceremony will take place along with resource table event. Extended an invitation to Rhiannon & Julia to help with the flag raising event.

9. Upcoming Events Announcements

- Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month May 10th at City Hall War Memorial
- Fourth Annual Juneteenth Celebration June 15th 12pm – 4pm at the Hyde Community Center
- Pride Flag Raising Event

10. Meeting dates for September – December 2024

- Tuesday, November 5th meeting date moved to Tuesday, November 12th
- All dates were approved by the commission

11. Rabbi Stern stepped down as the HRC chair effective Wednesday, June 5, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm

Next meeting will be September 10, 2024, on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Newton Health and Human Services Department