

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of February 4, 2019

Commissioners Present—Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Brooke Welles, Jane Brown, Eric Gurvis, Tamika Olszewski, David Kuppenheimer, Eli Ingraham,

Advisory Council Present—Lt Bruce Apotheker, Viviane Planine

Student Representatives Present— Imani Fonfield, Jacques Abou-Rizk, Nathan Persampieri

Guests –Sarah Heyman, Cindy Greene, Devlin Scott, Dana Hanson

Staff to the Commission – Linda Walsh and Shin-Yi Lao

The meeting was called to order by Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Chair, at 7:35 p.m. in room 211 in Newton City Hall.

1. Introductions

2. Minutes: Minutes from November 2018 approved, no quorum at January 2019 meeting so minutes will be posted as is

3. Student Reports

Newton South HS – Imani Fonfield

- In January, Imani heard about an incident involving two sophomores (one white student and one black student) that engaged in a physical fight. She heard it was started when the white student directed racial slurs toward the black student. Her understanding was that white student was suspended for 2 days and the black student was expelled. Bruce said that the police were not notified about this issue. There was some discussion regarding the role of HRC in these types of incidents.
- Imani said there has been some discussion and controversy at the school regarding Black History Month. Some students feel that it is isolating and highlights the fact that black students are a minority and some students feel that it isn't enough. In past years, NSHS has held a day of Black History programming in February but will not be doing so this year. There may be some recognition in March. Vivanna said this type of programming is usually student organized with help from faculty advisors. Discussion of programming opportunities related to Black History for next year.

Newton North HS – Jacques Abou-Rizk and Nathan Persampieri

- NNHS had a BLAC (Black Leadership Advisory Council) day which included speakers and panelists
- Next Wednesday is Asian Culture day
- To Be Kind Day is in March
- Nathan is working on scheduling the next annual Beyond Kindness Day which features panels discussing compassion toward people with disabilities

4. Hate Incidents

- Swastika and vulgarities drawn on a bench in Pelligrini Park
- Graffiti with racial slur at Oak Hill Middle School
- Swastika and vulgarities drawn in the snow at F.A. Day Middle School.

5. HRC Book Club

- C. Greene and E. Ingraham are spearheading a monthly HRC book club.
- Attendees at the MLK Day Celebration liked the social justice reading list and requested a version for adults.

6. HRC collaboration with NPS

- H. Kerwin Derrick will be meeting with representatives from NPS to discuss closer communication and collaboration. Topics to cover will include safe spaces for students to discuss hate incidents, educational programs in schools, and reporting/communication regarding hate incidents that happen in school.
- T. Olszewski is on a committee that is developing FAQs for the NPS discrimination complaint process.

7. Genocide Exhibit Discussion – ideas for locations to show the exhibit

- banks
- NSHS
- NewTV
- Post 440

8. Sharing of updated version of LGBTQ+ Resource Guide