

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of May 1, 2018

Commissioners Present—Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Brooke Foucault Welles

Advisory Council Present—Lt Bruce Apotheker, Viviana Planine

Student Representatives Present— none

Guests – Steven Hassan, Becca Schulman Havemeyer, Tamika Olszewski, David Kuppenheimer, Kyra Zola Norsigian, Holly Ryan, Jessica Lily, Jane Frantz

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

1. Hate Incidents

- A middle school student made anti-gay comments/threats against another student on social media. The perpetrator is in juvenile court.
- Newton South High School: A swastika was drawn on a piece of paper. An investigation revealed that it was a chemistry symbol that had been turned into a swastika. Police could not determine who drew it, but conversations were had with several classes on the inappropriateness of the action.

2. Student Reports

- No student representatives present. V. Planine reported on the following items:
 - Aware Day, which raises awareness on teen mental health, will take place at NSHS on 5/2/18.
 - Some students in the Courageous Conversations course saw *Get Out* and had a discussion on the issues raised by the movie.
 - Several NSHS students expressed interest in having a Holocaust memorial ceremony/educational program next year. They have requested a faculty advisor to help guide them.
- B. Schulman Havemeyer reported that the last FORJ meeting focused on METCO students. Several students presented, and the Black Students Alliance would like more support for their work and events. Discussed having HRC attendance at future Black Students Alliance events.
- S. Lao reported that on 4/26, a group of students marched from Newton North to City Hall to raise awareness around issues of gun violence.
- L. Walsh reported that there will be a North/South Unity Day event on Sunday. This event is the initiative of the Youth Commission. L. Walsh also reported that the schools are hosting a two-day professional development at the end of the year on racism and prejudice.

3. Programming

- Genocide exhibit
 - Posters were hung in the entrance to the NSHS library. The slideshow was not shown at NSHS this year.
 - Discussed retiring the posters next year and only showing the digital version.
 - Possible locations for digital version next year: high school and college libraries, NewTV
- Mayor's Prayer Breakfast – five members will attend
- Pride
 - Waiting on confirmation from Rev. Crowley
 - Someone from Joe Kennedy's office will speak
 - Coordinate with Q. Etchie, Director of Youth Services, to have one young person speak
 - Have water and light refreshments available

4. New/Other Business

- Membership: Decisions should be made within the next few weeks
- Ordinance review: Nothing new to report
- The Second Step is hosting an LGBTQ Relationships Youth Group every Tuesday evening at Temple Reyim

- One of the 2018 MA statewide ballot measures would repeal laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity. Discussed possible HRC response.
- Programming for 2018-2019:
 - Book speaker series, film series
 - Social Justice Reading List
 - B. Welles presented a book list from Social Justice Books, an organization that creates book lists on a variety of themes. Discussed possibilities for incorporating the list into the Mayor's summer reading program (e.g., kids get a special award if they read something off the list, use one of the books for a read-aloud event).
 - K. Norsigian reported that the story slam with Newton Nomadic Theater is in the planning stages and will report at the July meeting.
 - H. Ryan reported that the monitor in the City Hall rotunda will feature content for Pride Month in June. She is also promoting LGBTQ related events on her website.
 - Discussed possibility of Pride month BBQ at City Hall in June.
 - Lt. Apotheker suggested a movie night followed by a discussion. Could be outdoors or at a venue like West Newton Cinema. Possible movies: *Get Out*, *Zootopia*, *Coco*.
 - S. Hassan suggested reviewing the Charter of Compassion by Karen Armstrong as something the City of Newton could sign.

5. Next meeting dates:

- June 5th – Pride
- July 17th in room 211 of City Hall
- December 4th – HRC award night