

Human Rights Commission and Advisory Council Minutes Wednesday, January 15, 2014 7:30 p.m., Newton City Hall, HHS

Present: Peter Brown, Jane Brown, Holly Ryan, Sheila Mondshein, Sona Petrossian, Frank Wolpe, Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick, Dianne Chilingirian, Viviana Planine, Lt Bruce Apotheker
Absent: Nazik Kazimi, Brenda Krasnow,
Students: Eliza Beth, Mia Coleman, Hiroki Shibuya

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. and introductions were made.

Public Comment None

Student Reports January 6th was To BGLAD Day at Newton North. Body image confidence day was also held. Theatre Ink is presenting 'Thoroughly Modern Millie'. Since the Asian characters are portrayed in a stereotypical way, the Asian culture club is working with the theatre group to help address these issues so that the story will not offend the Asian culture.

Newton South also held a To BGLAD Day. The students said it was not widely publicized therefore many students did not get the chance to attend. The presentations are held in a small space so only a few classes can sign up. It would be great if the venue was bigger to accommodate more people but that could affect the presentations themselves. Holly mentioned many alumni from the high school returned to present and this is very powerful. Youth Summit III will be held at Brown Middle School on Wednesday February 5th from 6- 9pm. The featured speaker is Kevin Brael who talks about his struggles with depression.

Hate Crimes None

Welcome Hattie – new commissioner Peter welcomed Hattie. There was discussion about the process to become appointed to the commission. Linda said there are openings for advisory council members. Renee Murphy is now overseeing boards and commissions. Anyone interested in joining should send a letter of interest and resume to Renee.

MAHRC report Somerville has a person on staff that reaches out to minority groups and people requiring assistance in City of Somerville. Her role is to identify these groups and integrate them into the fabric of the community.

'Created Equal' program at Jackson Homestead This is a grant sponsored program with a series of films and panel discussions on the topics of slavery and interracial issues. HRC will be cosponsoring this event

MLK Day Peter read a letter from Tony Bibbo about the MLK celebration to be held on Monday January 20th. Jane Brown asked for volunteers to be ushers at the event to be held at the Second Church in West Newton.

June Pride month Holly is meeting with the Mayor and Dori about the event to be held at City Hall in June. The HRC could donate the flag and the balloon arch. The tentative date would be on June 6th. The program would be held in the early evening. Holly will continue to plan with the mayor's office and keep the commission informed. A vote will be placed on the agenda for the February meeting.

Vote to confer 'honorary status as chair emeritus' to Maryann Ferguson Mayfield There was discussion about the meaning of an honorary status. The vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Old /New business Sarah Perry, the executive director of Second Step, will give a presentation about domestic violence at the February meeting.

Sheila asked about the program idea that has brought up in previous meetings 'what it is like to be _____ in Newton'. Peter said anyone interested in forming a committee should stay after the meeting.

Peter said he will try to reconnect with Jayne Colino to do a program on age discrimination.

Jane spoke about a new book "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Anderson.