

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2014 MEETING

Commissioners Present—Sona Petrossian, Brenda Krasnow, Jane Brown, Nazik Kazimi, Sheila Mondshein, Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Holly Ryan and Dianne Chilingirian

Commissioners Not Present - Peter Brown

Advisory Council Present—Lt Bruce Apotheker

Student Representatives Present—Mia Coleman, Gabriella Lyn, Nkosi Grevious,

Guests – Bryan Barash, Daniel Angell (Newton Public Schools) and Sgt. Eric Rosenbaum (Newton Police Department)

Staff to the Commission – Linda Walsh

The meeting was called to order by Sona Petrosian, acting Chair, at 7:30 p.m. in room 202 in Newton City Hall. Introductions were made. There was no public comment.

Sona reported that Betty Chan of the Newton Asian Pacific American Network (NAPAN), a grassroots organization, would not be able to attend tonight's meeting. Ms. Chan would like the HRC to co-sponsor a speaker program with NAPAN in May at the Newton library for Asian history month. The consensus was that the HRC should assist with that program, and that there should be further discussion at the next regular meeting in January.

Two student representatives from NNHS reported on the school's leadership class, which is beginning fundraising efforts for an appropriate trip or for general purposes. The student representative from NSHS reported that To Be Glad day will be celebrated next month, and that most students there have received SOS suicide prevention training at school.

Newton police officer Eric Rosenbaum, who investigates possible hate crimes (and is also the officer handling elder affairs and mental health issues) stated that no hate crimes were reported recently.

The October minutes were unanimously approved subject to their being revised to include the names of those attending.

A status report on the upcoming HRC Awards program set for Dec. 10 at the Newton library was then presented. The event program has been prepared and a draft was circulated; publicity has been set, including TAB coverage; and refreshments are being handled. No formal RSVPs have been received as of yet, and phone calls will be made.

The program will begin promptly at 7 p.m., with refreshments at 6:30. Viviana Planine will introduce the awards to the NSHS students, and Michelle Leong to the NNHS students. Following discussion, the HRC members decided to present plaques to the honorees rather than paper certificates.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a slide presentation and discussion on the Newton Cares Coalition's QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) program for suicide prevention. The presentation was made by Dan Angell, a psychologist with the Newton school department, who was assisted by Eric Rosenbaum and Lt. Bruce Apotheker of the Newton police department. A handout of the slides and other written materials was circulated to those present.

The QPR program is not a counseling or treatment effort. It is intended for the lay person, to prepare him or her to "be there for the moment" for an individual who may be considering self-injury or suicide, by listening and helping to provide some timely support. The statistics for Newton high school students who seem to fall within the targeted group, because of depression or other factors, are significant.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m. The next meeting will be the HRC Awards presentation on Dec. 10.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila H. Mondshein