

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2010

7:30 PM at Newton City Hall

Attendance:

Commissioners present: Peter Brown, Marianne Ferguson, Brenda Krasnow, Sheila Modshein, Sona Petrossian, Susan Thomas.

Commissioners absent/regrets: Jane Brown, Muriel Esdale, Judy Fischbach.

Advisory council members present: Lt. Bruce Apotheker, Lillian Backman, Ann Capoccia, Dianne Chilingirian, Samuel Glass, Nazik Kazimi, Viviana Planine, Joan Rubin, Frank Wolpe.

Advisory council members absent/regrets: Homer Franck, Carol Y. Kelley, Norman F. Lazarus, Carleton Merrill, Myrna Offen, and Susan Rosenthal.

Advisory Students present: Lily Konowitz-NSHS.

Advisory Students council members absent/regrets: Camilla Jackson-NNHS, Haniya Syeda-NNHS, and Stephi Dworkin-NSHS.

Guest: Jeff Stone, Aaron Gornstein.

The meeting opened at 7:30pm, Welcome/Intro's

Students: Lily NSHS

A lot going on, she's VP for STAND club which sends money to Darfur.
Fundraiser 3-19-2010 (Friday)

Feb Vacation – Trip to France.

Global Learning – students went to Panama and did community service.

3-2-2010 – Improv show.

Mid March – Anti bullying programs by the Newton Partnerships.
fundraising events they organized.

Clubs formed after Haiti earthquake and raised money thru various fundraising events they organized.

Safe rides: Students are working with Veterans Cab.

Water Aide fundraiser, Daffodil day for cancer, Choir event at U Ma, Black History presentation, each block was a different subject.

Viviana – METCO Race Task Force

Movie “Far from home” to whole school, some students will be trained.

NNHS- Camilla Reported by email.

Presentation: Peter introduced the subject that a ballot to repeal chapter 40, Jeff Stone, Aaron – 40B law grew out of civil rights movement in 1969.

Goal to create some affordable housing in every MA community. It’s been very effective and has created 58,000 homes in MA, also responsible for 80% of affordable housing outside of Boston.

Newton is at 7%. The goal is 10% per town. Many agencies in Newton use the chapter 40. Overall it’s been done on a friendly basis as a partnership with the City and agencies. It helps people of low income families, seniors and disabled. The average income is \$50,000 to \$55,000 in Newton it is \$66,000. It’s a lot of teachers, health care workers, fire, police, nurses and human services etc. jobs across the spectrum.

Chapa is forming a broad based coalition with businesses, LWV and other civic groups, religious institutions, senior groups like AARP, civil rights and human rights groups. Opponents paid a signature collector \$300,000 and They got 100,000 people to sign the petition. Many people thought they were signing for affordable housing.

The coalition will be working to educate the public and tap into grassroots Groups who will help.

Peter asked Aaron: Who is behind this initiative to repeal chapter 40?

“slow growth initiative” based in Methuen funded by a zero population growth group in N.H..They call the program welfare for developers and they are confusing the issues because chapter 40B helps residents.

For rental dev. With 40B – waiting lists for housing lists- lottery system.

70% local preference in all communities.

40B is necessary because it helps with multi-family. The developers have to comply with mountains of regulations, but members expressed concern of various issues: zoning, developer’s monstrosity of buildings, profits protect affordable housing org. Various regulatory changes have been made since

2003. Some limit the size of the project. If a municipality is showing plans of meeting affordability and growing steadily towards 10% affordable units they can demonstrate that they don't need 40B. Some of the regulations are concessions to local control.

This petition for the ballot initiative wipes out the law and will nullify the ongoing plans for over 12,000 units, yet they are saying they are for affordable housing yet affordable housing is not being built other than in conjunction with 40B.

This is not rent subsidies and section 8.

Ann noted: they need to tie affordable housing and 40B with the people who live there and with their jobs and the economy.

We thanked Jeff and Aaron.

Police Lt. Apotheker – on 1-13-2010 incident at learning prep school with 2 swastikas on bathroom wall.

1-20-2010 a report of strange messages of biblical messages on a business in upper falls. Police have tracked him down – he's a kook.

Ann Glick had an event at her house on 1-22-2010 flyers were posted on poles on the streets, "rule 19.org" police contacted F.B.I.

2-3-2010 at Learning prep school – hate incident of Haiti fundraising flyer was defaced.

2-12-2010 Oak Hill Middle School – Graffiti incident on wall "if you're black, rape every Jew in school."

Bruce said there are incidents of people taking advantage of homeowners including fake water-meter readers, chimney inspectors.

Administrative Business – Minutes of 1-13-10 – Sona 1st, Joan 2nd approved.

Treasurer's report

Brenda asked if we could buy sandwich boards, members will explore.

Susan asked about Human Rights Commission brochures.

Committee Reports

Fair Housing – Sheila- FHC is moving forward on trainings and programs. It's been very busy.

Program- Brenda spoke of tomorrow's 3-11-10 event. There have been a lot of PR programs.

MAHRC – Peter – Idea of doing program for 40B MAHRC meeting this Friday, they'll be discussing overview of hate incidents.

Wednesday, 6-23-10 from 5:30 – 8pm for HRC members to go and staff.

Veteran Services – John MacGuilvary stopped by, he met some members when we inquired about flags. He came to invite HRC to be in the Memorial Day.

Communication – Susan said 1-2 people are needed to work on ongoing PR for HRC. Brenda said you need to get items in.

Other Business

Marianne – For Newton Serves, have possible HRC team on April 25, 2010 She'll be contact person.

Joan – saw performance of “HONK” about the ugly duckling and the children learned the message of not bullying and discrimination. Joan would like to see more children see this play. She's learned that schools in Wellesley and Weston are producing it (the end of May). Is it something we can do, in terms of promoting it?

Sona offered to pass the info to the Newton Elementary School Personnel.

9:10 – Adjourned.