

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of September 1, 2020**

**Commissioners Present** – Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Bryan Barash, Jane Brown, Eli Ingraham, Tamika Olszewski, Brooke Foucault Welles

**Commissioners Absent** – David Kuppenheimer

**Advisory Council Present** - Bruce Apotheker, Viviana Planine

**Student Representatives Present** – none

**Guests** – Leeann Bailey, Connie Chow, Yuval Dinoor, Sharon Dudelson, Jake Epstein, Courtney Foster, Simon French, Valerie Goldstein, Lisa Gordon, Cindy Greene, Dina Grossman, Dana Hanson, Jenny Huang, Carrie Jasper, Zoe Jasper, Alex K, Elianna Kruskal, Joshua Lieberman, Susan Lowcock, Tatjana Meschede, Benyamin Meschede-Krasa, Nora Murad, Kyra Norsigian, Maura O’Keefe, Rosa Ortega, Alex Shames, Gloria Singleton-Kahn, Stephanie Soriano, Andrew Steinberg, Elena Swartz, Eryn-Ashlei

**Staff to the Commission** – Linda Walsh, Shin-Yi Lao

The meeting was called to order by Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Chair at 7:03pm on Zoom

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of July 30, 2020 approved
3. Bias-related incidents and statistics – Lt. Apotheker
  - 7/26: Officers responded to a report of anti-Asian slang words used against a bicyclist.
  - 8/3: A man used anti-Asian language against a woman sitting outside CVS. A bystander assisted the woman and the man spat on the bystander. The man has been charged with assault and battery.
  - 8/13: Kids in Pellegrini Park used offensive language against a woman that was walking through. Incident currently under investigation.
  - Lt. Apotheker introduced Stephanie Soriano who shared an incident that happened to her recently. She reported that her children were playing outside when a man used hateful language against them. She states she confronted the individual and he used hateful language against her and picked up a rock to throw at her – she videotaped the incident and shared the video with police. She called the police and when the officer spoke with the individual he claimed he feared for his life. Ms. Soriano reports that NPD were very supportive and Lt Apotheker reports that the man was charged with disorderly conduct.
  - Lt Apotheker shared data he has collected that shows the breakdown of bias-related incidents and crimes from 2005-2020 based on the group that was targeted. Additional statistics are forthcoming and will be posted to the City’s website in the future.
4. Presentation by Defund Newton Police Department
  - Nora Murad, Benyamin Meschede-Krasa, and Andrew Steinberg presented on the goals and approach of their group and also presented data they had compiled.
  - Presentation followed by questions and discussion.

5. Declaring Racism is a Public Health Crisis
  - Draft statement approved with the following amendments:
    - i. Change 'implicit bias' to 'cultural literacy'
    - ii. Add 'School Committee' anywhere it says 'Mayor and City Council'
  
6. Protocol on Hate – Tamika Olszewski
  - Tamika reviewed the community response protocol presented by Anne Josephson at a previous meeting and called for a vote on the motion that the Newton Human Rights Commission make a formal recommendation to Mayor Ruthanne Fuller and the Newton City Council to adopt this Community Response to Hate Speech or Bias Incidents.
  - Questions and discussion. Commissioners decided that additional discussion was needed and the motion would be tabled until October meeting.
  
7. Updates from the Mayor's Office – Dana Hanson
  - Police Reform Task Force is looking at data
  - Historic Newton has an ad hoc working group evaluating the City Seal and whether it should be changed. Currently reviewing applications to be on the committee. There will be a public engagement process.
  - Newton has submitted an application to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for a grant to participate in a year-long assessment and planning process to create a Racial Equity Municipal Action Plan. We will find out next week if we have been funded. The mayor's office is considering options for doing the work if the grant is not funded.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08pm

Next meeting October 6, 2020 at 7:00pm on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick