

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of November 3, 2020**

**Commissioners Present** – Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Jane Brown, David Kuppenheimer, Sue Lowcock, Tamika Olszewski, Brooke Foucault Welles

**Commissioners Absent** – Bryan Barash, Eli Ingraham

**Advisory Council Present** - Viviana Planine

**Student Representatives Present** – Imani Fonfield, Amaris Mills

**Guests** – Jessica, Archer Cindy Greene, Dana Hanson, Rabbi Keith Stern, Katani Sumner

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

The meeting was called to order by Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Chair at 7:06pm on Zoom

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of October 3, 2020 approved
3. Bias-related incidents – Linda Walsh
  - 10/8: Anti-LGBTQ+ incident at NNHS. The two students involved have been identified and disciplinary action is being handled by the school.
  - 10/27: Zoom bombing incident at Brown Middle School where the n-word was used.
  - 10/28: Anti-Semitic graffiti was found on a grave at the East Parish Burying Ground
  - 11/1: A sign was put up on the Mass Pike bridge that said “It’s ok to be white”
  - 11/1: Graffiti using offensive language was found on a tree by Crystal Lake
4. Complaints received – Linda Walsh
  - 1 complaint received: Passerby at Rumford Ave Resource Recovery Center heard an employee make a derogatory comment to a client. This has been reported to and is being handled by the Department Head and Human Resources.
5. Student reports – Imani Fonfield and Amaris Mills
  - Imani reported an incident that happened on 10/20. She reported that a NSHS freshman had a Zoom profile picture of a famous Black person’s head on a gorilla’s body.
  - Small in-person meetings/outings of various affinity groups are happening to create safe spaces.
6. Updates from the Mayor’s Office – Dana Hanson
  - The City Council has passed the resolution to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous People’s Day. They added an amendment to consider finding a different day to celebrate Italian American Heritage.
  - Police Reform Task Force:
    - i. Held a public meeting last week for residents to share experiences they’ve had, positive or negative, with the Newton Police Department (NPD). There will be another meeting for residents to discuss their impressions of the NPD. Residents are also invited to share their experiences, thoughts, and recommendations using an [online form](#).

- ii. Have interviewed three consulting groups and hope to have a consultant picked by next week. The consultant will develop recommendations for the task force based on community surveys, recommendations from community stakeholders, and work with the police department.
  - There is an ongoing search for a new police chief. Community members have been identified to be a part of the selection committee, as required by state statute.
  - Overdue Events, including the implicit bias workshop with Dr. Banaji, Raising Anti-Racist Kids, and the New Kid by Jerry Craft author event went well.
  - The Mayor's office is working with Human Resources to develop diversity/equity/inclusion training for city staff.
  - The Mayor's office is exploring options for municipal racial equity action plans.
  - The Newton Interfaith Clergy Association is hosting an event on Thursday 11/5: "A Post-Election Gathering in Prayer and Hope"
  - The City Seal Working Group will have a community meeting on 11/28. They are working on a questionnaire to collect ideas from Newton residents.
7. Human Rights Awards/Human Rights Day
- Student nominations due 11/8
  - Event will be on Zoom
8. MLK Day
- Let Hattie know if you want to be part of the planning committee
9. Genocide Awareness Month
- Will potentially do a speaker series in April
10. Overdue Events
- Next event: The color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America with Author Richard Rothstein. The author will provide an overview which will be followed by a panel discussion on policies and zoning in Newton.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06pm

Next meeting December 10, 2020 (Human Rights Award Night) on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick