

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of February 11, 2021

Commissioners Present – Brooke Foucault Welles, Jane Brown, David Kuppenheimer, Sue Lowcock, Tamika Olszewski

Commissioners Absent – Bryan Barash, Eli Ingraham, Rabbi Keith Stern,

Advisory Council Present – Bruce Apotheker

Student Representatives Present – none present

Guests – Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Carol F, Ellie Gray, Steven Hassan, Nora Lester Murad, Robert Pierson, Eric Rosenbaum, Katani Sumner, Liz Tavares

Staff to the Commission – Shin-Yi Lao

The meeting was called to order by Brooke Foucault Welles Chair at 7:03pm on Zoom

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of January 5, 2021 approved
3. Newton police report – Lt Apotheker and Officer Eric Rosenbaum
 - Coffee with a Cop event next week on Zoom 2/17 from 5:00-6:00pm
 - 1/16 – Second banner hung, referenced woman killed at the Capitol. Investigation revealed the banners were hung by the “Revolt Through Tradition” group. The banner was taken down. Reported to ADL who stated that the group is active throughout New England.
 - NSHS – Anti-transgender remarks posted on Discord, a social media platform. Youth officer is investigating.
 - 1/29 – Brown Middle School: ALM sticker in a letter sent to a teacher of color. Youth officer is investigating and school community has responded.
 - 2/11 – Employee of District 118 was let go due to anti-Hispanic speech. He subsequently broke the window and left a letter on the car of a Hispanic employee. Individual was charged and police is following up with victim.
4. Complaints received – Shin-Yi Lao
 - None received
5. Student reports
 - NNHS student reached out to Brooke – concerned that there was no discussion of Holocaust Remembrance Day in school
 - NSHS HRC launched an internal website that highlights human rights issues
 - NSHS Asian Students Organization hosted a Lunar New Year luncheon
 - Programming done at NSHS: “BLM in school” to discuss the movement and issue
6. Mayor’s office report
 - Police Reform Task Force presented to City Council last week. Full report will be available soon.
 - City Seal – goal is to have a new version by mid-March

- Community Breakfast in May. Email Hattie if you are interested in attending planning meetings.
 - Juneteenth is now an official holiday in Newton. Working on how to commemorate the holiday.
 - Indigenous People's Day is now an official holiday in Newton. Looking at how to celebrate.
 - Conversations with a Cop will now be a monthly event. Hoping to attract more young people to the events.
 - 2/17 and 2/24 from 6-8: Public forum on the discontinuation of the 554 bus route which will affect accessibility to essential services.
 - 3/2 at 6:30 – event with NAMI and Riverside Emergency Services hosted by HHS
 - May – mental health awareness month – Commission on Disabilities will be hosting an event, still working on details/planning
7. Reminders and upcoming events
- Art Event featuring an Indigenous artist at the Library
 - 2/24 – Spotlight on Mental Health planning meeting with Commission on Disability
 - Upcoming events in the Overdue series. See website: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/mayor-fuller/mayor-s-initiatives/overdue-confronting-race-racism-in-newton>
 - Pride June 1 – start thinking about an honoree
8. Debrief: MLK Day Celebration
9. Discussion: Transition planning
10. Discussion: Genocide Awareness Month Exhibition
- Unable to use City Hall Gallery this year – look into other options
 - Look into ways to promote the existing electronic exhibit
11. Discussion: Annual Report
- Suggested sections:
 - i. Hate crimes and bias related incidents (separate sections for community-based vs. school-based)
 - ii. Policing in Newton
 - iii. Resources – existing and identified gaps
 - iv. Other aspects of human rights
 - Suggestion: look at what other cities/towns have done
 - Include content from MCAD, other commissions, and other organizations
 - Send ideas to Brooke before next meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm

Next meeting March 2, 2021 on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Brooke Foucault Welles