

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of March 2, 2021

Commissioners Present – Brooke Foucault Welles, Bryan Barash, Eli Ingraham, Sue Lowcock
Commissioners Absent – Jane Brown, David Kuppenheimer, Tamika Olszewski, Rabbi Keith Stern,
Advisory Council Present – Bruce Apotheker
Student Representatives Present – Imani Fonfield
Guests – Carol F, Suzanne Feldman, Cindy Greene, Steven Hassan, Nora Lester Murad, Robert Pierson
Staff to the Commission – Shin-Yi Lao, Linda Walsh

The meeting was called to order by Brooke Foucault Welles Chair at 7:04pm on Zoom

1. No quorum, vote on minutes from February 11 meeting deferred
2. Newton police report – Lt Apotheker
 - 2/21: Officers responded to a road rage incident at the Chestnut Hill Mall where someone said “Go back to where you came from” to someone else and threatened them with a gun. The person was arrested and charged.
 - 3/2: Zoom bombing incident in one of the high schools which is under investigation.
 - 3/2: Solomon Schechter Elementary School – “N word” in one of the bathrooms.
3. Complaints received – Linda Walsh
 - None received
4. Student reports – Imani Fonfield
 - There have been a few anti-Semitic incidents at NSHS and on social media. The NSHS HRC will host a luncheon tomorrow to discuss these events.
 - There have been anti-AAPI incidents at school.
 - There has been more promotion of boys’ games than girls’ games and sexist comments on the NSHS sports page on Instagram. School administration is looking into how to address this.
 - The Black Student Union is hosting Black Culture Day on 3/10
5. Reminders and upcoming events
 - March 2, 6:30-8pm, Webinar on Mental Health resources, www.newtonma.gov/mentalhealth
 - March 2, 7pm, Communicating in a Diverse World, newtonfreelibrary.net
 - March 16, 7pm: Overdue event: When Getting Along is Not Enough: Reconstructing Race in Our Lives and Relationships with author Maureen Walker
 - March 24, 1:30-3pm: Commission on Disability Mental Health Subcommittee, Screening of Resilience (movie preview on March 17 at noon) contact Eileen Sandberg: sandberg.eileen@gmail.com
 - June 1: Newton HRC Pride flag raising
6. Nominations for Pride Honorees
 - Solicit nominations from the public for adults and students

- Send nominations to hrc@newtonma.gov
7. Selecting a Vice-Chair
 - Need someone to represent HRC at meetings and events.
 8. Genocide Awareness Month Exhibition
 - For this year, promote the exhibit on the website
 9. Holocaust Remembrance Programming - Steven Hassan and Robert Pierson
 - Discussion of possible presentations and ongoing programming
 10. Discussion: Annual Report
 - Reach out to community organizations to participate and for data collection

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm
Next meeting April 6, 2021 on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Brooke Foucault Welles