

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of April 6, 2021

Commissioners Present – Brooke Foucault Welles, Jane Brown, Eli Ingraham, Sue Lowcock, Tamika Olszewski

Commissioners Absent – Bryan Barash, Rabbi Keith Stern

Advisory Council Present – Bruce Apotheker, Viviana Planine

Student Representatives Present – Imani Fonfield

Guests – Carol F, Cindy Greene, Steve Hassan, Elianna Kruskal, Robert Pierson, Aaron Velasco

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

The meeting was called to order by Brooke Foucault Welles Chair at 7:02pm on Zoom

1. Minutes from February 11 and March 2 meetings approved
2. Public comment period
 - No public comments
3. Newton police report – Lt Apotheker
 - 3/17: Officer responded to a road rage incident where two drivers got into an argument and one claimed that the other used the N word.
 - 3/29: Someone affixed a sticker from the Patriot Front, a white supremacy group, onto a city sign. Sticker removed.
 - 3/31: Two stickers on a street sign that said “Harriet Tubman, underground posse.” Unclear what this represents.
 - 3/31: Two Zoom bombing incidents at NSHS (reports made to youth officer on 4/6). Zoom class interrupted by racial slurs and other offensive remarks. Person has been identified and officers are responding. Second incident at a PTSO event where someone used racial slurs and posted sexually suggestive videos and Swastikas. This incident is under investigation.
4. Complaints received – Linda Walsh
 - Two complaints received related to housing. Referred to community policing and MCAD.
 - Discussion on updating the complaint form based on DA’s initiative to standardize complaint forms across the state and to have the form translated into languages other than English.
5. Student reports – Imani Fonfield
 - Vigil recently held at NSHS for the shootings in Atlanta and anti-AAPI hate
 - Upcoming sophomore class discussion on the shootings in Atlanta, anti-AAPI hate, and the intersectionality of race, class, and gender
 - Recent Asian-American Awareness Day
 - Jewish Student Union holding an upcoming webinar on Holocaust remembrance and Jewish culture
6. Updates from the Mayor’s Office – no representative present

7. Updates from Commissioners

- Mental Health Working Group Meeting (Jane): Looking at programming focused on young people and stress.
- Rally against Anti-Asian Hate (Brooke)

8. Upcoming Events

- Pride honoree: LGBTQ health care providers at Newton-Wellesley Hospital
- Will identify one youth honoree

9. Annual Report

- Part report of HRC activities over the past year, part summary of civic data
- Suggested sections of the report
 - i. Hate/bias incidents and crimes
 - ii. Complaints received
 - iii. Demographics
 - iv. YRBS data
 - v. Key issues from the year
 - vi. Activities that promoted human rights

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm

Next meeting May 4, 2021 on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Brooke Foucault Welles