

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of September 14, 2021

Commissioners Present – Brooke Foucault Welles, Cindy Greene, Eli Ingraham, Sue Lowcock, Tamika Olszewski

Commissioners Absent – Jane Brown, Rabbi Keith Stern

Advisory Council Present – Bruce Apotheker

Student Representatives Present – Rachel Alpert-Wisnia (NNHS), Ryan Chitty (NSHS)

Guests – Carol Fulton, Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Emily Isman, Nora Lester Murad, Lee P

Staff to the Commission – Shin-Yi Lao

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

1. Minutes from July 13 meeting approved
2. Newton police report – Lt. Apotheker
 - This week: An officer responded to an organization in Newton where an individual believes he’s being targeted because he’s a white man who works with black and minority women. Their HR department did an investigation and found the allegations to be unfounded.
 - 9/2: A resident alleged his landscaper used anti-Semitic language in a phone conversation.
 - 8/13: An officer responded to an incident between a DPW driver and resident. The DPW driver alleged that the resident used a racial slur against him in a similar incident 2 years ago.
 - 8/11: A swastika was found on a whiteboard at NNHS. Police used a security video to identify the student who drew it. The principal of the school the student attends has spoken with student and their parents.
 - 7/24: A resident with a Black Lives Matter sign in his lawn reported that a white male drove by his home and yelled “race traitor” at him.
 - 7/21: One of the four doors placed on Newton Centre green was vandalized. This door was painted by an artist of Asian descent and one side had writing in Chinese.
 - No more reports of Asian homes being targeted for break-ins.
3. Complaints received – Shin-Yi Lao
 - Complaint of harassment related to race and housing. Complainant was referred to MCAD and the Fair Housing Commission.
 - Complaint regarding an experience a resident had with the Newton Police Department. Complainant was given the contact information for the Officer in Charge.
4. Student reports – Rachel Alpert-Wisnia and Ryan Chitty
 - Rachel: Students have expressed concern about an email that students of color at NNHS received over the summer. The email was from someone who was conducting a study on support students of color receive from teachers who are white. The students felt that more focus should be on hiring teachers of color.
 - Ryan: Nothing to report

5. Updates from the Mayor's Office – Hattie Kerwin Derrick
 - Hattie has been appointed the City's LGBTQ+ Liaison
 - There has been a decision to make the MLK Day celebration virtual again this year. If you are interested in joining the planning group, contact Hattie.
 - There are several upcoming series planned with the library, asking HRC to co-sponsor.
 - Indigenous People's Day celebration – Hattie will send out a flyer, please help advertise

6. Updates from Commissioners
 - Brooke will compile the parts of the annual report that she has received and will share it at the next meeting. The goal is to publish it in January.
 - Eli presented from the small group working on programming around race. It was decided to curate a list of available resources.
 - Discussion on the role of the HRC.

7. Upcoming Events Staffing
 - Speaker at Indigenous People's Day Event: Eli Ingraham
 - Harvest Fair – co-hosting a table with Fair Housing Commission and the Commission on Disability: Brooke, Tamika, Eli, Cindy

8. HRC Awards Honoree
 - Start thinking about honorees
 - Will put out the public call for nominees (student and adult)

Reminders and Upcoming Events

- October 11, 12-5pm Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration
- October 12, 7pm: 13 Moons and 12,000 Years: Honoring Indigenous Peoples Day, Newton Free Library (virtual) <https://newtonfreelibrary.libcal.com/event/777916>
- October 17, 10-5, Harvest Fair

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm

Next meeting October 5 at 7:00

Respectfully submitted by Brooke Foucault Welles