

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of November 9, 2021

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

Commissioners Absent – Rakashi Chand, Cindy Greene, Rabbi Keith Stern

Advisory Council Present – Bruce Apotheker

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

Guests – Sandra Davidow, Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Carol Fulton

Staff to the Commission – Shin-Yi Lao

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

1. Minutes from September 14 and October 5 meeting approved
2. Newton police report – Lt. Apotheker
 - 10/26: Report from a parent that on 10/13 their child was at a cross country meet at Newton Country Day School. An unknown student from the opposing team made a hateful remark. The student who made the hateful remark was later identified and sent an apology letter to the student and parent.
 - 10/29: Graffiti stating “F*** N-word” was found in the third-floor girls’ bathroom at Day Middle School. Unable to narrow down specific time frame the incident took place so unable to identify potential involved parties.
 - 11/1: Graffiti stating “F*** N-word” was found in the second-floor girls’ bathroom at Day Middle School. Under investigation.
 - 11/2: JCC reported that an unknown individual emailed them demanding that they cancel their “Gender Identity and Kids with Author Kyle Lukoff” web event or he would “throw up a picket line.” The mayor’s office also received a call and email complaining about the event. Under investigation.
3. Complaints received – Shin-Yi Lao
 - None received this month
 - Website updated per discussion last month
4. Student reports – Rachel Alpert-Wisnia, Ryan Chitty
 - NNHS: The Newton North Human Rights Council, a student group, met with school administration. Topics discussed include the process for reporting instances of discrimination, concern that students are not aware of this process, and the perception that instances of hate speech graffiti in bathrooms is increasing, creating an unsafe environment.
 - i. Commissioners discussed the difficulty of identifying individuals who write graffiti in bathrooms and how to educate about the issue.
 - NSHS: The school is hosting an upcoming Native American heritage festival. Two incidents reported:
 - i. An assistant coach of the football team became angry with student athletes for listening to loud music and used a racial slur. The coach has been fired.

- ii. There have been reports of Westford Academy football players using racially charged language against South players at both home and away games. Football players were invited to sessions to discuss what happened with administrators. There are conversations happening at the administrative level about whether to continue playing against Westford due to these issues.
5. Updates from the Mayor's Office –Hattie Kerwin Derrick
 - The City is conducting a Community Needs Assessment to identify programs that would assist lower resourced residents to become financially self-sufficient. Surveys will be sent out for community input.
 - Finalizing interpreter/translator services for the City
6. Updates from Commissioners
 - Brooke:
 - i. Harvest Fair went well, great to share with other commissioners
 - ii. Will need to appoint a new chair in January or a co-chair to serve with Brooke
 - Commission on Disability (Jane Brown): Several programs related to mental health in the last few months
7. HRC Award Recipient Selection
 - Adult nominees: Jane made a motion to select all three nominees, Indigenous People's Day Newton Committee, Renande Loayza, and Regina Wu. Tamika seconded and all commissioners present unanimously voted to approve the motion.
 - Newton North Nominees: Tamika made a motion to select all nominees, Jane seconded, and all commissioners present unanimously voted to approve the motion.
 - Newton South Nominees: Jane made a motion to select three of the four nominees, Eli seconded, and all commissioners present unanimously voted to approve the motion.
8. Public Comment
 - Sandra Davidow: Discussion on how to address the issue of hateful graffiti in bathrooms at school.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm

Next meeting will be the Human Rights Award Ceremony on December 2 at 6:00

Respectfully submitted by Brooke Foucault Welles