

Belmont Human Rights Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Belmont Town Hall, Room 1

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Attendance: Barbara Watson, Carl Brauer, Paul Solomon, Jirair Hovsepian, Darren Bowmeester, Sarah Jane Henman, Seneca Hart

Belmont Police Department: Captain J. Peter Hoerr

Belmont Against Racism: Kathryn Bonfiglio

Belmont Housing Trust: Rachel Heller and Gloria Leipzig

1. The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:05 pm.
2. The Minutes from the Thursday, April 7, 2016 meeting were amended and accepted as amended.
3. Jirair reported that there were no calls to the phone-line but that we received an e-mail from a Suffolk Law School student forwarding a brochure about the application of International Human Rights Law to local communities. Barbara will take the May minutes.
4. The Phone Line and E-mail assignment and minute taker were shared:
May- Fran
June- Darren
September-Carl
October- Nan
5. Rachel Heller and Gloria Leipzig of the Belmont Housing Trust addressed the meeting about the Trust's initiative to engage the community in developing a Housing Production Plan and about the Trust's meeting scheduled for June 14, 2016 at 7:30 pm at the Beech Street Center (266 Beech Street) to start the discussions on doing so. They spoke about various issues and emphasized that a plan will not only allow for the Town to plan for its housing needs, whether affordable to low income or moderate income residents, but would also allow the Town to be in control of the development of housing and where it is built. All interested community members are highly encouraged to attend the June 14th meeting.
6. An invitation to speak at the MLK Breakfast, January 16, 2017, has been sent to Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley. She has been asked to respond by May 24, 2016. We will consider additional speakers at the June Commission Meeting.
7. Fran informed us that a group has requested a meeting with the School Superintendent about LGBTQ concerns at the Middle School.
8. The Belmont Stand Up Campaign held a meeting at the Belmont Public Library on Sunday, May 1, 2016. The meeting was well attended and included elected officials and teachers.
9. Jirair reported on the 101st Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, including the Proclamation issued by Board of Selectmen on April 11th and the well attended and moving April 22nd State House Commemoration. He reminded us of the importance of remembering the past as we go forward and spoke about troubling current world events.
10. Paul reported on Author Anita Diamant's talk for One Book One Belmont which took place on Tuesday, April 26. The talk was extremely well attended and she was a wonderful speaker. He thanked Carl for his work on the One Book One Belmont Committee.
11. The A Path Appears Jimmy Tingle Fundraising Event will take place this Saturday, May 7, 2016 at 7:30 pm. It will take place at Belmont High and will benefit the Belmont METCO Support Fund, Food Pantry and Bristol Lodge. It is \$30 per ticket. Members were encouraged to attend and to encourage others to do so also.
12. Liaison Reports:
Belmont High School: The High School's Amnesty Club cancelled its Jamnesty fundraiser because of unexpected administrative requirements. Rumors heard by the High School students about anti-Muslim

behavior at the Middle School were shared. It was suggested that many students at the Middle School disagreed with the behavior.

Belmont Against Racism: Kathryn reported that on May 26 there will be a program for staff and students at the Middle School about understanding stereotyping and creating a more inclusive environment. She also reported that the High School will be seeking funding for a half time position for an advisor for Diversity Week, which Principal Richards plans to reinstate at the High School.

Belmont Police Department: Captain Hoerr pointed out that it is Kindness Month in Massachusetts and he highlighted ways that Town Officers are able to assist the elderly and others in need of assistance in the community, which helps these residents feel safe and at home in Belmont.

13. Belmont Town Day will take place on Saturday, May 21, 2016 from 9 am-4 pm.

14. The Commission's next meeting will take place on Thursday, June 2, 2016 at 7 pm.

15. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Watson

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