

**BARNSTABLE COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMISSION
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www.BarnstableCountyHRAC.org

MINUTES of the REGULAR SESSION

Monday February 10, 2020

East Wing Conference Room, County Complex, Barnstable, MA

Advisory Commission Members Present:

Alan Milsted, Dave Schropfer, Patricia Oshman, Jeanne Morrison, Katie Riconda, Wendy Bierwith

Advisory Commission Members Not Present:

Kate Epperly, Morgan (Mwalim) Peters, Paul Thompson

Also Present: Theresa Santos, Town of Barnstable liaison, Brian O'Malley, Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates liaison, Susan Quinones, Human Rights Coordinator, Jack Yunits, Barnstable County Administrator

Public Members: Mr. Greg Wheeler

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm. The first item on the agenda was the election a Chair and Vice Chair for the Advisory Commission for calendar year 2020.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- **A motion was made to elect Alan Milsted as Chair** by Dave Schropfer, seconded by Patricia Oshman, which was unanimously approved.
- **A motion was made to elect Kate Epperly as Vice Chair** by David Schropfer and seconded by Patricia Oshman, which was unanimously approved.

Electronic Filing

- Electronic filings have been approved by the County. Subject to approval by the Advisory Commission, meeting agendas and minutes can be posted on the County website to fulfill any Open Meetings Law requirements. and may be posted on the website, including meeting minutes.
- **A motion was duly made by Dave Schropfer, and seconded by Wendy Bierwith, to allow the Human Rights Advisory Commission agendas and minutes to be posted electronically on the County website.** The motion was unanimously approved.
- **Action Item:** Alan will check his records for any unpublished meeting minutes, or agendas, missing from the website and get them to Sonja Sheasley to post.

- There was a question regarding standardizing the meeting minutes and whether there was a County template that could be followed. **Action Item: In addition, Theresa Santos has such a template and will send it to Susan Quinones and Katie Riconda to use.**
- Katie agreed to take minutes for this meeting, which led to a discussion as to whether we should have a Recording Secretary to take all Advisory Commission meeting notes. **Action Item: Alan will make this an agenda item for our next meeting.**

Approval of Minutes of meeting held on January 27, 2020

- A motion was duly made by Wendy Bierwith, and seconded by multiple people, to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2020 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Presentation by Jack Yunits, Barnstable County Administrator and Discussion

- Jack Yunits gave a historical perspective on the original Barnstable County Human Rights Commission (HRC) and its reincarnation as the Barnstable County Human Rights Advisory Commission (HRAC).
- Human rights became an issue the Assembly of Delegates wanted to address with a group consisting of appointed Human Right Commissioners and representatives from each town on Cape Cod.
- The Board of Regional Commissioners which oversaw the HRC, through an Ordinance passed in 2019, streamlined the HRC by eliminating the Town Representation Council; and maintaining a nine-member board, with a Coordinator to handle day-to-day operations.
- Any event that we would like to support, should be forwarded to the County Administrator for advance approval; if he determines that it requires additional approval from the Regional Commissioners, he will seek that approval.
- The importance of HRAC members understand the open meeting law was stressed. The group was reminded that under the Open Meeting Law, advisory members cannot act on any item that is not already on the agenda. If advisory members want to add items to an upcoming meeting agenda, their requests should be emailed to the Coordinator.
- Members were reminded that the subject matter of meetings is open (except when the group goes into Executive Session) and that guest presenters are permissible.
- The BCHRAC is not taped but held to the same standards as other commission meetings that are taped, regarding the Open Meeting Law and transparency to the public.
- Jack Yunits then opened the meeting up for questions and comments from advisory board members.
- There was excitement amongst commission members regarding the new ordinances and new website
- Commission members agreed that they'd like to inform community members how to file a human rights complaint on the website.
- However, Jack advised that if a matter involves the police or a school matter, the Advisory Commission should defer to those institutions to work through the issue;

although we could put out a neutral statement, encouraging all sides to cooperate with the investigation.

- **Action Item: The commission will schedule a strategic plan meeting for two hours with an outside facilitator.**
- **Action Item: The commission will work on the process for issuing statements, with could be part of the strategic plan meeting.**

Establishing Links with Towns

- The advisory board members would like to establish links with each town.
- **Action Item: Advisory members to discuss this topic in more detail.**
- Jeanne mentioned No Place for Hate and how it is being replicated among towns. Falmouth had the first workshop. Would there be a town by town, regional, or county approach to this work?
- Advisory board members agreed that they'd like to rotate the locations of the monthly HRAC meetings so that community members from different towns can attend.
- **Action Item: Commissioners to discuss implementing this at next meeting.**

Events

- The Human Rights Academy planning group has requested volunteers to help set up and clean, etc. at spring event.
- Theresa suggested changing the name from Human Rights Commission Breakfast to **Human Rights Commission Awards Ceremony**, to aid requests for funding from the County and elsewhere.

Coordinator Report

- The Coordinator would like to review the current intake procedure for complaints. Katie and Jeanne volunteered to assist with the review.
- **Action Item: Susan, Jeanne, and Katie to meeting regarding the intake procedure.**
- Susan recommended forming smaller sub-groups or workgroups among commission members, such as social media, that are topic specific that could work in between BCHRAC meetings
- **Action Item: Susan will call each advisory board members to go over a list of connections with organizations and groups across the Cape, rather than via email.**
- There was discussion regarding the 2020 Census and the immigration question. It was stated that the Census Questionnaire was already printed with the immigration question, after it was made optional.
- If the advisory board members have an announcement or event, they'd like to share with the HRAC, they can e-mail Susan directly before the next meeting.
- **Action Item: Follow-up on this action item in terms of implementation.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

