



**BARNSTABLE COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

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**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, April 20, 2020, 5:00-6:30 PM
Remote participation**

Advisory Commission Members Present:

Alan Milsted (Chair), Kate Epperly, Wendy Bierwirth, Jeanne Morrison, Trish Oshman, Morgan Peters, Katie Riconda, David Schropfer, Paul Thompson.

Also Present:

Brian O'Malley (BC Assembly of Delegates liaison), Darlene Zerbe (guest) and Susan Quinones (Coordinator)

Advisory Commission Town Liaisons Not Present

Theresa Santos, Barnstable, Patricia Armstrong, Yarmouth

1. Call to Order and Role Call

Alan Milsted called the meeting to order and Susan conducted a roll call @ 5:05 pm. (Members Paul Thompson and Morgan Peters joined the meeting after the roll call). With a quorum present, Alan proceeded to the first item on the agenda.

2. Open Meeting Law Requirements

Susan had previously sent all members the most recent revisions to the Open Meeting Law for their review. She explained that electronic postings of meetings are authorized, as are online meetings. Otherwise, all provisions of the OML are still operative. Susan requested that this meeting be recorded as it is an option on Zoom.

3. Minutes of meeting held on February 10, 2020

Minutes from Feb 10th meeting were unanimously accepted as circulated. There was no permanent decision on the issue of having a recording secretary for the monthly meeting. For now, minutes would be taken by volunteers on a rotating basis. Wendy and Susan are both

taking notes for the current meeting. Susan will assemble and circulate them to advisory members as draft minutes.

4. Reports from Working Groups

More detailed written reports from each of the Working Groups can be found in the “Agenda and Meetings” section of the Barnstable County Human Rights Advisory Commission website.

4.1 Human Rights Academy Working Group

Trish reported a recommendation that the \$500 McDowell Award be awarded as two separate awards of \$250 each. Details about the application process have been sent to all HRA advisors for circulation to all eligible seniors, Applications will be reviewed by HRA working group members Morgan Peters and Wendy Bierwirth. In the event of a tie, Trish will be the tiebreaker. In a planned virtual end-of-year ceremony, using a format like the Girl Scout’s Gold awards, graduating senior and any retiring advisors will be recognized for their contributions to the HRA. Brian O’Malley explained that citations for advisors will come from the county commissioners rather than the assembly. Deadline for applying for the award is April 30th. Award recipients will be announced on May 8th. The virtual event will occur soon after. The presentation is still being worked on.

Alan noted that he was still awaiting a response from Kath McDowell, widow of former BCHRA Commissioner Malcolm McDowell, about the extent to which she might be involved in this year’s award process.

Paul Thomson asked that we put a notice on the website about a NAACP \$1000 scholarship for a graduating senior who will be studying music. Susan asked Paul for all the details so that she could include it in the reminder she will be sending out the HRA advisors.

A unanimous motion was passed to:

- approve awarding the \$500 McDowell award as two separate \$250 awards,
- ratifying the decision to have Morgan Peters and Wendy Bierwirth review and select the McDowell winners from the applications submitted, and
- in the case of a tie, allow Trish Oshman to cast the tie breaking vote

4.2 Human Rights Awards Breakfast Working Group:

Jeanne Morrison reported they would like to have the breakfast at the Hyannis Golf Club again on December 10th. They are seeking donations to fund the event. The discussion of a theme for the breakfast included a possible focus on COVID-19, front line, first responders, medical, home health and service industries during the pandemic; or the U.N.’s 2020 theme: Closing the Inequities Gap to Achieve Social Justice.

Brian O'Malley reiterated that citations for award recipients will come from the County Commissioners rather than the Assembly of Delegates. He also advised that funds are available for the Tim Award and welcomes and invitation that will be associated with the Human Rights Awards Breakfast again.

4.3 Strategic Plan Working Group:

Kate Epperly discussed the mission statement which will come from the Ordinance creating the HRAC. Dave explained that the Ordinance is, in effect, the charter for BCHRAC setting out what we are expected to do, what the County expects of us and what we should expect of ourselves. The strategic plan will depict how we intend to do that by establishing HRAC priorities and purposeful activities. Dave suggested that after the development of a strategic plan, the group may want to establish an implementation plan as well.

Kate explained that the commission is migrating from an education and investigation body to an advisory group focusing on communication and referral, by developing partnerships with local communicate groups and towns. The plan will focus on developing HRAC priorities based on peoples' needs, and services available to them, together with building a network of key contacts. The plan is at a foundational brainstorming stage. A list of potential partnerships is being compiled for a group meeting later. Susan will consult with the BC IT dept. regarding Cape wide remote meeting capacity. The HRAC network will include No Place for Hate, NAACP, schools, and police. Susan will reach out to Yarmouth Police Chief Frank Frederickson to invite him to speak with us, possibly at the May Advisory Commission meeting.

4.4 Intake/complaints Working Group:

Jeanne Morrison explained that the Commission needs to determine its goals and objectives before establishing procedures for intake and complaints. Susan has previously sent out assessment of community contacts as a first step. Susan advised there were no calls or complaints to the HRAC in March.

4.5 Social Media Working Group:

Wendy Bierwirth described the work they have been doing with Sonja Sheasley, the BC Communications Director to establish the BCHRAC webpage and social media accounts on Facebook. HRAC presence on Twitter and Instagram are still in the development stages. Wendy showed an example of a video developed by the social media group about human rights during the Coronavirus. The group will also post an article monthly whose theme could be selected from the National Awareness Observance Calendar. Stress Awareness was selected for April. Katie Riconda provided a list of county mental health and addiction recovery information which Sonja will be uploading to the County and HRAC websites. Alan would like us to add resources for people who do not have health insurance. Susan will coordinate all submissions to Sonja. Susan will ask Sonja about sharing items like the video on Cape Media for Channel 99. Trish

offered to have the video redone in Portuguese. Alan asked if it could be done in Spanish as well. Susan will add this to the list of items to discuss with Sonja.

Sonja has also agreed to put on an hour workshop for the Advisory Commission, highlighting the features of the HRAC website, and answering any questions members may have. Susan will be surveying the group to determine a mutually convenient time for this workshop. Sonja has already advised that the session will have to take place on a Wednesday because of her busy schedule.

5. Mashpee Wampanoag Land-in-Trust:

After the federal government disestablished the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and removed their land-in-trust, Susan had called Rep. William Keating's office at Alan's request to see how we could be helpful in supporting the Mashpee Wampanoags. His aide said to be helpful we should support the congressman's legislation which would recognize the tribe and return the land permanently into a trust. After further discussion of the issue, the members agreed that they wanted to support the Mashpee Wampanoag's in challenging the Interior Department's action, but that this should be a countywide effort, not just an effort of the HRAC.

The language was proposed some language for submission to Jack Yunits to seek support of the County Commissioners and the Assembly of Delegate. It was moved and unanimously approved to submit the following language to Jack Yunits for Countywide approval.

"Barnstable County stands with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe in denouncing the U.S. Department of Interior's decision to disestablish the Mashpee Wampanoag tribal reservation and take their land out of trust."

It was suggested that Susan touch base with Morgan (Mwalim) Peters (who had left the meeting at this point) to advise the Mashpee Wampanoag's of our intended action.

6. Other business:

Jeanne expressed appreciation for all the work Susan Quinones is doing. Wendy requested members try to work with Susan during her weekly hours.

Kate expressed appreciation for all the work Jeanne is doing. No Place for Hate is moving ahead with a pilot for the active bystander training in May online. Kate also advised that Chris Morian, Independence House, has agreed to teach a domestic violence workshop for religious leaders. Trish said her work on the hotline at Independence House confirmed an increase in domestic violence.

7. Adjournment

Upon a motion, which was duly seconded and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.