

BARNSTABLE COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

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**Barnstable County Human Rights Advisory
Commission (BCHRAC)
Monday, October 19, 2020, 5:00-6:30 PM Remote
participation**

For public participation, contact Susan Quinones, HRC Coordinator, at 508-375-6611 or at susan.quinones@barnstablecounty.org, no later than noon on October 19, 2020.

1. 1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 6:05 p.m.

Advising Commission Members Present:

Alan Milstead, Kate Epperly, Paul Thompson, Patricia Oshman, Jeanne Morrison, Wendy Bierwirth, and Dave Schropfer

Apologies for absence: Katie Riconda, Mwalim Morgan

Also Present

Susan Quinones, Coordinator and Brian O'Malley, BC Assembly of Delegates liaison.

Guests:

Rick Draper, Robert Manz, Michael Darring, Angelica Oshman

Guest Introductions:

Robert Manz, photographer from Pocasset, commission applicant

Rick Draper: retired teacher from Brewster, member NAACP, commission applicant

Michael Darring: public citizen interested in our work.

1. 2. Reminder of Open Meeting Law requirements for remote participation, and announcements: meeting is recorded; any comments will be addressed at the subsequent meeting.

1. 3. Public comment requests. None.

2. 4. September 21 meeting minutes were approved as circulated.

1. 5. Assembly of Delegates (AoD) Resolution 20-06: follow-up: September 21st meeting: Susan Quinones advised that at an earlier AoD meeting two women of color were muted and ejected during a comment period. 42 people attended the next meeting to defend the 2 women. Brian O'Malley and 2 other Assembly Delegates proposed a policy and code of conduct resolution to address interactions with the public during meetings. BCHRAC took a formal written position in support of the resolution along with several improvements. At the meeting, many delegates apologized to the two women stating that their silence did not imply agreement with the speaker's actions. The Resolution was adopted.

Brian O'Malley added that the Resolution's purpose was to put the standards in one accessible place. It is being posted on the AoD's website. He emphasized that public participation is needed if the AoD's work is to be meaningful. The charter gives the speaker

real latitude in maintaining proper order, but it needs to be uniformly applied and cannot feel arbitrary and capricious.

Alan Milstead added that diversity, inclusion, and sensitivity training to correct behavior is also needed for all those involved in county work, which BCHRAC will address once the new commission comes into office.

5. Report from Human Rights Coordinator: Susan Quinones' full report is being posted at the website.

- a. a. BCHRAC, received 2 new complaint forms this month.
- b. b. Fifteen impressive applicants have applied for vacancies on the board, representing a great geographic and ethnic diversity. Due to the commission's high workload, she hopes those applicants not selected will be willing to participate in policy discussions on subjects such as education, housing, and health issues. The strategic planning committee has talked about also reaching out to community partners to assist with these efforts. Alan Milstead added that in the Commission's previous incarnation they had 15 town representatives plus a representative from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council, so the committees were larger. We need to have balance between members and volunteers to get things done efficiently.
- c. c. The Tim McCarthy Human Rights Champion award will be announced at the HR Awards breakfast. BCHRAC has submitted 3 candidates for that award.
- d. d. Member updates: Katie Riconda will be on leave from 12/24 to 4/2. Paul Thompson's term is being extended the end of April in her absence. Jeanne Morrison will be on medical leave as of 10/30, hoping to return by the end of the year. Pat Armstrong is taking a six-month leave. Dave Schropfer and Paul Thompson's terms representing the commission on the Health and Human Services Advisory Council expired 5/31/2020. BCHRAC has submitted Katie Riconda and Susan Quinones to replace them.
- e. e. Susan Quinones reintroduced her administrative assistant, Allison Carter to the commission.

6. Recommendations from Working groups:

- a. Human Rights Academy**  The Academy has tentatively been set for either Nov 18th or 25th.

The format will be either Zoom or Google Classroom with breakouts. If the latter, we will ask Cape Cod Academy to co-host.

The primary presentations will be John Lewis v Kwame Touré by Mwalim Peters and an interactive training session on bystander, microaggression, implicit bias, or similar. Several potential programs under consideration are being attended by members. This includes a program on social and racial justice by Team Harmony that starts tomorrow, and a program on Implicit Bias that starts on the 28th. The committee is also looking for volunteers to attend the breakout groups from the different schools during the Academy. If you are willing to volunteer for either opportunity, please let Trish know.

b. HR Awards Breakfast

Jean Morrison outlined the virtual event scheduled for Dec 10th. The draft program includes 3 awards given annually plus a special honorary recognition of front line 2020 unsung heroes whose contributions have strengthening our communities and lent our lives a sense of normalcy. Notice for nominations go out next week. The event will also feature a prerecorded video of essential people working in the community.

The Awards Committee will try to prerecord most speakers, so 80-90% of the program is fixed. Some legislative speakers and award citations may be live during the meeting.

Anticipated time: 8:30 – 10:30, including a 15-minute intermission where they will highlight HRAC activities including videos from the Human Rights Academy.

The Zoom platform will be used. Capacity: 100 “persons”. (Alan asked if groups could register to join as if an individual). The county has approved their request to accept donations (\$10 or more if desired). There will be no restriction on how the funds are to be used.

Members are asked to look at the mail list of invitees to the event from last year and make any modifications by Friday. A list of speakers will be distributed this week to give the board the opportunity to weigh in.

The board unanimously approved: 1. The theme: Human rights reform, building unity through equality, 2. Making the breakfast a Fundraising event. 3. Special recognition to the County’s front-line workers.

Susan applauded Jeanne for her outstanding job keeping the project on track. Kate Epperly also commended Jeanne’s outstanding work.

Public Service Announcements are planned about the awards and the Annual Awards Breakfast.

c. Intake/Complaints

Jeanne Morrison advised the complaint form has been finalized and is presently being tested on Formstack and should be available online next week. The form will also be used as a tracking and reporting document. Three complaints have been resolved successfully and 2 new complaints are being considered. The form was revised to replace the word “investigation” with “assistance”, as BCHRAC is not an entity with enforcement powers. We can provide assistance and resources to get help. It is important that the public know us as an entity that takes human rights seriously.

Alan complimented the experience of working with Jeanne.

Susan Quinones advised a complaint log is secured in a locked cabinet. Several people who have approached the Commission have not returned the complaint form, perhaps scared of retaliation which the form clearly states are forbidden or having been satisfied by having their grievance heard. The process is also setup to circle back with the complainant and have a documented close out.

8. Proposals (if any) and information items from HRAC Members

- a. a. Patricia Oshman advised that the Commission’s letter to the Town of Falmouth regarding the newly established position of Affirmative Action/Diversity Outreach Officer was well received.
- b. b. Kate Epperly advised that Barnstable No Place for Hate is offering active bystander training. They held a virtual youth listening session September 4th and are presently summarizing resulting material. They are doing fundraising: including sharing of flash fiction stories related to hate and bigotry.
- c. c. Paul Thompson advised the NAACP voted to work on a task force to distribute a questionnaire to administrators and schools Cape wide that relates to student populations, graduation rates, etc. It was suggested to add a link to our website. without endorsing it if Susan and Sonja Sheasley deem it appropriate.

9. Adjournment:

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was passed by roll call at 6:28 p.m.

The next Commission meeting will be November 16th.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Bierwirth