



BARNSTABLE COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

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Minutes of Monday, December 14, 2020 Meeting Remote participation

Advisory Commission Members Present: Alan Milsted (Chair), Kate Epperly, Wendy Bierwirth, Jeanne Morrison, Katie Riconda, Trish Oshman, Mwalim Peters, Paul Thompson, and Dave Schropfer.

Also Present: Susan Quinones (HRAC Coordinator), Leo Blandford and Isaac Lopez (Advisory Commissioners-designate, Guests)

1. **Call to Order:** Alan Milsted called the meeting to order and Susan conducted a roll call @ 5:04 pm.
2. **Reminder of OML:** Susan reviewed the Open Meeting regulations and requirements for remote participation and announced that the meeting was being recorded. She announced that there was a quorum.
3. **Members expressed Gratitude** to departing Board Members Alan Milsted, Paul Thompson, and David Schropfer for their many contributions to the Commission.
4. **No public comment.**
5. **Minutes of the October 19, 2020** were accepted as amended by Alan Milsted.
6. **Human Rights Coordinator Report.** Susan Quinones supplemented her November report previously posted on the BCHRAC website with an oral report:
 - a. **The Human Rights Academy** was a huge success. Trish Oshman, Wendy Bierwirth and Mwalim Morgan were praised for organizing the event and engaging students from all over the Cape in this activity. A tool kit will be sent out to all students with ideas for this year's Human Rights Projects. A spring Human Rights Academy event is being planned, with Wednesdays April 28 and May 5 being suggested to HRA Advisers.
 - b. **Human Rights Breakfast** was another success with approximately 100 people signing on to celebrate ordinary individuals and entities providing extraordinary acts to serve the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Darlene Zerbe, a committee volunteer on the Breakfast Committee, along with HRAC Members, Paul Thompson, Kate Epperly, and Jeanne Morrison were commended for their exceptional work in organizing this event.

Special compliments were made for the legislators' speeches about the Unsung Heroes.

c. **Future Commissioners:** Isaac Lopez, Leo Blandford, and Lynn Levine will have their appointments as new Advisory Commission Members confirmed by the County Commissioners at their meeting on December 16. We are looking forward to welcoming them at our first meeting of the year.

d. **Staff notices:** Pat Armstrong, Yarmouth Liaison, has resigned. Paul Thompson will stand in for Katie Riconda until April or May while she is out on maternity leave. Kate Epperly will resign from her regular job effective January 1, allowing her to commit more time to the Commission.

e. **Ethics training and new Advisory Commissioner Orientation:** There was a discussion about options for two training issues in the New Year to orient new members, and to conduct ethics training/refresher for all members and discuss priorities for the newly constituted Advisory Board. The Coordinator will seek views on days, dates and whether Advisory Members prefer a single, half-day session or two separate sessions.

f. **Volunteer Corps:** The County Commissioners have approved adding a volunteer corps to BCHRAC. This would provide Advisory Members on committees with the support necessary to engage in additional issues such as police, housing, medical, etc. Twenty people applied to become commissioners this Fall, of whom a number expressed willingness to assist.

g. **Holdover issues:** It was agreed to defer two issues raised at the September and October meetings over to the 2021 session [1] allowing public to engage throughout meetings as well as during the public input at the beginning of the meeting, and [2] adopting a formal code of conduct.

h. **MAHRC letter to Baker:** The Massachusetts Human Rights Coalition (MAHRC) is asking its members to support a proposed letter to be sent to Governor Baker, urging him to sign the Police Reform bill. Several issues including reported unreliability of proposed facial recognition technologies on POC and women were discussed. It was proposed and approved to support the letter subject to further consultation between the Coordinator and Advisory members and Jack Yunits, County Administrator.

i. **Police Budget Issue:** The Yarmouth Police department has requested the purchase of military equipment be included in their 2021 budget. The ensuing discussion both expressed concern and emphasized the Commission's role as advocator, educator, and coalition builder rather than engaging in specific local town issues.

7. **MacDowell Award:** It was agreed that there would be two awards in 2021, one each to a Junior and a Senior High School student (or Riverview School GROW Program student); the discussion about giving the entire award exclusively to a Junior in the future will be deferred to the 2021 session.

8. **Comments from Chair:** Alan Milsted spoke of his public involvement since 2011, first as a town representative and coordinator, then as a Commissioner. He expressed his appreciation for the real renewal of commitment and understanding by the Commission this past year. Retiring member David Schropfer expressed appreciation of his time working

with the commission, first as a Town Representative and then as an Advisory Member. He felt particularly thankful to bring a unique perspective from his life experience as the husband of a Native American.

9. **Adjournment:** Following a roll call vote, the meeting ended at 6:30 pm.