



BARNSTABLE COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

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Minutes of Monday, February 8, 2021 Meeting

Remote participation

Advisory Commission Members Present: Kate Epperly (Acting Chair), Wendy Bierwirth, Jeanne Morrison, Patricia Oshman, Paul Thompson, Lynn Levine, Leo Blandford, and Isaac Lopez, Mwalim Peters.

Also Present: Susan Quinones (HRAC Coordinator), Brian O'Malley (AoD liaison).

Absent: Sheila Lyons (Regional Commissioners' liaison).

1. **Call to Order:** Kate Epperly called the meeting to order, and Susan conducted a roll call @ 5:05 pm. Kate will continue as acting Chair until nominations can be considered at this Board meeting. Kate asked for a volunteer to take minutes, which Isaac agreed to do; and a timekeeper, which Wendy agree to do.
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. **No public comment.**
4. **Approval of January 11 meeting notes:** Susan stated that Jeanne had requested the addition of a statement that the idea for the AoD to have this training, came from the recommendation made to delegates, after a complaint was filed with the BCHRAC. Patricia motioned to accept. Wendy Bierwirth seconded.
5. **Selection of Chair and Co-Chair:** As Acting Chair, Kate laid out her goals and priorities for the meeting, to include: 1) Elect chair and vice chair, 2) Schedule strategic plan retreat 3) Form a group to conduct a needs assessment for data collection, to assist with strategic planning, and 4) discuss the possibility of outreach to human rights organizations on the Cape to create a central "clearing house" of data and information.
 - a. Jeanne Morrison stressed the importance of formalizing the strategic plan and suggested that each committee lead contribute to its timely completion. Kate did an

informal poll of who could attend which days; Susan offers to send out a Doodle poll for scheduling.

b. Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Vice Chair: Wendy Bierwirth nominated Patricia Oshman; Paul Thompson seconded. After a roll call vote, Patricia Oshman was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

Chair: Lynn Levine nominated Kate Epperly; Jeanne Morrison seconded. Paul Thompson nominated Jeanne Morrison; Patricia Oshman seconded. Jeanne Morrison declined the nomination. Paul Thompson nominated Mwalim Peters, who declined. There was a roll call vote on Kate Epperly' nomination as Chair, where Kate was unanimously elected as Chair.

6. **Old Business:** Committee chairs provided overviews of each committee and reviews of 2020 Committee Reports:

- a) Wendy Bierwirth representing Social Media: all social media postings are done by Sonja and Allison; our primary involvement is to increase following and engagement and to do a review of organizations promoted by HRAC; submission of topical articles. Susan would like someone to take more of an active role in redesigning the web site. Wendy requested photos for the bio page. Current content is the product of a former intern.
- b) Jeanne Morrison representing Breakfast Committee: provided a review of the committee report; stated the event was a success and that recipients of awards have been sent their certificates and were grateful to be recognized.
- c) Patricia representing Human Rights Academy: has been in action for more than ten years representing high school and middle schooler students for two events per year. In addition to the fall event, in collaboration with the Provincetown middle school, a supplemental program is being planned for February 10th, for students, who were unable to attend the fall event because of technological difficulties. The HRA invited other Human Rights Clubs to participate.
- d) Kate Epperly on the Strategic Plan: states we have a lengthy plan hatched in 2015 and while the "turf" remains the same what we need to do is edit language to accommodate the new ordinance and get concrete with new operational goals and objectives. Requested volunteers to work on plan, to follow needs assessment, to collect data and plan retreat. Wendy Bierwirth and Lynn Levine volunteered.
- e) Jeanne Morrison on the Intake Committee, states that they have been very busy with the revision of policies and procedures, identification of agency resources; needs to do more in that area. Created a new web based intake form adding to the procedures on email and phone calling. Stated that the complaints are usually processed within 24-48 hours of receipt. Complainants are called to discuss their expectations and resources available through BCHRAC. For 2021, Jeanne states she would like to develop a core group of volunteers; revise the resource list; and develop a database of types of complaints. Jeanne mentioned that from opening to closing a case, varies according to the specifics of each case (actions range from writing a letter to filing a civil rights complaint et al).

- 7. Public Participation:** Should the public be able to ask questions in meetings? Discussion consensus was that questions should be submitted in advance of meetings to be added to agenda and addressed at meeting (or in the case of Teams meetings questions could be submitted via the chat function and addressed if when relevant).

Motion by Lynn to require advance submission of questions or to submit via the chat function during remote meetings with questions or comments to be addressed at the discretion of the committee. Jeanne Morrison seconded. Unanimously approved.

- 8. Educational achievement and advancement barriers to Black and Brown students:** Mwalim spoke of the disparities in advancement to secondary education of black and brown students and proposed that his presentation, entitled “Curating Your Child’s Education,” be offered through the HRAC to parents of 7-12 grade students of color. Target date for offering this program would be April. The Committee discussed some of the ways this program might be offered, including Kate’s suggestion that it could be offered via the Human Rights Academy; Patricia suggested that since it was really targeting parents, Mwalim should consider contacting groups such as POC, NAACP and No Place for Hate and Mike Macenas of the Brazilian Community. Patricia Oshman made a motion to sponsor the program and to explore partnerships with other community groups. Jeanne Morrison seconded. Unanimously approved.

9. Report from the Human Rights Coordinator:

- a) Provincetown Middle School HRA Program scheduled for February 10.
- b) Sean O’Brian, EM manager, requested HRAC participation in the outreach effort to underserved communities regarding equitable vaccine distribution within the County.
- c) Reminder to members that they still have time to review the chart with committees to finalize their areas of interest.
- d) Committee activities will depend on the Strategic Plan Retreat, planned for March.
- e) Volunteer Corps: Biggest obstacle to rolling it out is the absence of a working strategic plan. The establishment of an official volunteer corps is on hold, however, it is ok still appropriate for individual committees to use volunteers.
- f) Will be sending Barnstable County handbook for committee members with mandatory requirements. Allison Carter will be collectin followed by a checklist owned by Allison.
- g) Massachusetts Human Rights Council meets second Friday of each month; Susan attends. As second: Jaguar, Jeanne and Kate have all indicated interest in attending in a rotating manner.

Kate Epperly reminded committee of the opportunity to donate in support of the committee’s work.

Motion to adjourn approved anonymously @ 6:45 pm.