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April 21 2010 Meeting Minutes

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes – Final April 21, 2010

Present: Sheri Baron, Marlissa Briggett, Vita Cohen, Vice Chair Stacy Davison, Gary Horowitz, Nick Minton, Chair Nancy Rhoads, Marlene Schultz, Bill Shea, Nancy Sweeney, Suzie Talukdar

Absent: Christine Carney, Jorge Loayza

Welcome - Commissioner Suzie Talukdar - appointed by the School Committee

Open Forum – No guests this evening.

Review of March Minutes – Minutes accepted as amended.

Incidents and Complaints –

Hardy School incident – report of children playing war games with fake blood and swastikas (Indiana Jones vs. Nazis) outside after school. The principal learned of the game from a teacher who in turn called the ADL and parents. The principal used this incident as an educational moment. The AHRC commends the principal for her actions regarding this matter.

Brackett School issues were discussed with decision to take no action at this time – Commissioners Sweeney and Shea will follow up should the matter come before the AHRC.

Ottoson incident follow-up – Chair Rhoads reported of the many meetings and phone calls regarding these incidents. Also, there was an article written for the Advocate to make citizens aware of such incidents and how the AHRC can be helpful in this regard.

Chair Rhoads and Commissioner Davison met with Supt. Bodie and gave her examples of how the AHRC deals with incidents.

Chair Rhoads also suggested a principal training program and offered financial support for such. Principal Ruggere would like to establish an anti-bullying task force. Commissioners Sweeney and Shea will work on this task force should it come to pass.

Chair Rhoads suggested that every fall a representative from the AHRC meet with school principals to inform them of the works of the AHRC and to reassure them of the process of reporting incidents and the need to cover all the bases. Every incident should be reported to the APD who in turn will call the AHRC.

Stand Against Racism Update

Kudos to Commissioner Davison for creating the flier for this event, which reads as follows:

Friday, April 30th: at 7:30 pm, a showing of *Freedom Writers*, based on the book, *The Freedom Writers Diaries*, at the auditorium in the High School. Mr. Pereira will open this event.

Saturday, May 1st: from 11:00 until 1:00, a rally along Massachusetts Avenue from Town Hall down to the Pleasant Street intersection.

Sunday, May 2nd: from 7:30 – 9:00 pm, a forum entitled *A Community Conversation About Race* sponsored by Representative Jay Kaufman at the first Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 630 Massachusetts Avenue.

As we are co-sponsors, Chair Rhoads asked all commissioners to make every effort to attend. She will also attend the Selectmen's meeting on April 26th where a proclamation of this event will be read.

Subcommittee Reports –

Dialogues

Dating Violence Review – Chair Rhoads was disappointed with the adult program but received a good report regarding the youth portion of the program.

Schools – Chair Rhoads and Commissioner Davison will go before the School Committee on April 27th to request support of the AHRC training efforts. Commissioners Brigggett and Cohen also volunteered to attend with them. Other subjects like protocol, holidays, homework and a possible summer training program were also discussed. Commissioners Shea and Sweeney volunteered to attend the ACLU Speakers Bureau in September. Commissioner Shea moved to appropriate \$1,000 from the AHRC Donation Fund toward the cost of the Principal Training Program. Seconded by Commissioner Baron. Motion accepted by all.

Policies and Procedures – After much discussion, Commissioner Shea made a new motion *'that any amount up to \$300.00 may be spent between meetings at the discretion of the chair.'* Approved by all. Chair Rhoads suggested the Commissioners think about some possible changes in the Sub-Committees, which will be discussed at a future meeting.

Rapid Response/Publicity – Chair Rhoads made a motion to change the subcommittee name from Rapid Response to Community Outreach Committee – motion accepted by all.

Other Business

Budget - Chair Rhoads made some suggestions and asked the Commissioners to think about expenses for the rest of this fiscal period – tabled for next meeting.

Graffiti – Officer Smith called to report misinformation regarding policies of the sale of spray paint. He and the APD have spoken to suppliers and have requested a written policy be created and made visible in their stores within two weeks. He will keep us posted on the results.

Superintendent's Diversity Task Group – There was discussion of the Superintendent's Diversity Task Group for Schools. It was suggested that the AHRC send an invitation to have a joint meeting with them. Chair Rhoads will invite them to attend the June 17th meeting. Commissioners Sweeney and Talukdar volunteered to represent the AHRC at their 4:00pm meetings when possible.

Chair Rhoads asked the Commissioners to spend a little time to share what brought each of us to the AHRC. She would like to reform and expand the sub-committees and made some suggestions. She asked the Commissioners what they would like to see happen with the AHRC in the next three years and to return next month with some ideas.

Motion to adjourn was made and approved.

Submitted by:

Marylynn Carnell

Staff Assistant