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Human Rights Commission Minutes 07/21/2004

Arlington Human Rights Commission

The regular meeting of the Arlington Human Rights Commission was held on Wednesday, July 21, 2004 at the Whittamore Robbins House, 670R Massachusetts Ave, Arlington.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00PM.

In Attendance:

Bill Shea
 Christine Deshler
 Nancy Rhodes
 Kevin McGann
 Christine Carney
 Nick Minton
 Nancy Sweeney

Absent:

Sheri Baron
 Kim Lam
 Jim Webster
 Cecilia Akuffo
 Marlissa Briggett

The minutes of the June 17, 2004 meeting were accepted with corrections.

Sub-committee Reports:

The dialogue subcommittee reported on the progress for the October event, which is a dialogue at which a representative from the 3 presidential candidates on the Massachusetts ballot will discuss the candidates' position on human rights issues both locally and globally. Several dates have been chosen for the event: October 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27 & 28. The presidential candidates will be contacted by next week to secure a definite date. The sub-committee will meet on Monday, August 2nd.

Complaints and Incidents:

Bill reported that a resident has been in contact with the HRC with regards to his disabled son being denied service in a local restaurant. As of the meeting the resident and his son has not submitted a formal complaint against the restaurant. Bill Shea will contact the resident to find out if he intends to proceed by filing a formal complaint.

Discussion Regarding Office Staff Replacement:

There was a discussion with regards to the need for a part-time office staff. The argument was made

by one commissioner that the duties of the staff person could be carried out by the commissioners and that the money budgeted for the salary of the staff person could be used by the commission to plan events that have been cost prohibitive in the past. After much discussion it was decided that a staff person is still needed by the commission and that any person hired would be utilized by the commission in a more productive manner. The commission needs to develop a clear job description for the position. It was suggested that we speak to MaryAnn Sullivan to get a better understanding of work she did for the commission.

Chris Deshler moved that an advertisement for the part-time position be placed in the local newspapers and for the job to be posted internally. The motion was seconded and passed with 6 yes votes and 1 no vote.

Strategic Plan:

As part of the on going Strategic Planning for the commission the idea of a Human Rights Award was once again discussed. The idea is that the commission will recognize citizens whose actions are reflective of the goals of the HRC.

For outreach by the commission new brochures will be printed to be at the booth for Town Day. Christine Carney will look into getting the commission an email address that would be accessible by all commissioners. The email address will be used for the public to contact the HRC and for the HRC to notify people on our mailing list of upcoming events. Chris Deshler moved that we make it a policy that we do not share our email list with any other groups. The motion was seconded and passed.

Bill Shea has been attempting to set up a meeting with representatives from the School Committee and the Selectmen to discuss the goals of the commission and the involvement of the School Committee and the Selectmen in those goals.

New Business:

Nancy Rhodes informed the commission that the Sudanese man who was arrested and put on trial for the rape of a local woman is to be retried later this summer. A possible reaction to the retrial might be flyer distributions by hate groups. Nancy suggested that the HRC prepare a response to be sent to the Advocate as a guest column. Nancy Rhodes, Christine Carney and Cecilia Akuffo will work on the potential response and will have it ready by the next meeting for the commission to review.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40PM

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 18, 2004 at 8:00PM. The meeting will be held at the Whittemore Robbins House unless the commission is otherwise informed.

Respectfully submitted by:
Christine Carney