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Human Rights Commission Minutes 12/15/2004

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2004
(Final Copy)

In Attendance:

Sheri Baron, Marlissa Briggett, Christine Deshler, Kevin McGann, A. Nick Minton, Nancy Rhoads, Bill Shea, Nancy Sweeney

Absent:

Cecilia Akuffo, Christine Carney, Kim Lam, James Webster

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m.

1. The November minutes were accepted with minor corrections
2. Bill Shea introduced John Maher who reported that he has reviewed the eleven year history of the AHRC -- regarding the Commission's question relating to subpoena powers - according to General Law 233.23C -- we have very little power -- but he gave us a few suggestions on how to work out complaints if people do not comply: we can issue a press release (but we should be sure to have it checked first!), attend a Selectman's meeting and make a report to them, have a public discussion on cable TV - but the best option is for us to meet with the party to try to work out the problem -- there has to be a fact finding meeting for anyone involved in mediation -

Regarding having an Open Meeting -- (Sec.23A) -- sub-committees are subject to investigate or come up with a policy -- the Clerk's Office must be notified and the meeting must be posted at least 48 hours in advance -- there must be a quorum for any Open Meeting -- an agenda should be posted but is not required -- investigations do not need to be posted -- that would defeat the purpose of the team. He also recommended that committee minutes should always be posted on the Town website and at the Robbins Library -- complainants and respondents need to be named within the minutes -- all must be reminded that their names could become a public matter -- (which some committee members were concerned that this could be a deterrent for a complaint) -- he recommended a two step plan - #1 -- investigate to decide if it is a case - #2 -- mediate -- he related that he would speak with Bob Ritchie on this particular law and he will get back to Bill Shea with any further information.

3. Bill Shea reported that the January 24th meeting planned with Homeland Security regarding racial profiling has not worked out -- suggested a movie, a dialogue, or debate on the subject -- possibly someone from the ACLU, who think profiling is too invasive, or a representative of Massport to speak on the law enforcement view -- Bill Shea will follow up.

Nancy Rhoads suggest we put the mainstreaming dialogue on the back burner until next Fall and she will look

into a program on domestic violence for the Spring.

4. No complaints or incidents were reported this month

5. Other Business

Kim Lamb is resigning from the Commission – will be sending resignation letter to the School Committee – Town Manager, Brian Sullivan is interviewing an AHRC prospective member – Sheri Barons expressed her concern that the Commission is not diverse enough – Chris Deshler suggested we hold off on any appointments until after the survey goes out and also the possibility of Commission to advertise for two appointees.

Survey – there are 24,176 census mailings going out – the Commission reviewed and made some changes to the survey to be included with the mailing – it was suggested that we put a notice in the Advocate to alert readers about the survey and the importance of reading and responding to the Commission of their views – Nancy Rhoads will call Patsy Kraemer to see if there is a possibility of placing the survey on the Town website for more public notice.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Prepared and submitted by:

Marylynn Carnell

Staff Assistant