



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## Human Rights Commission Minutes 06/20/2001

**Minutes: June 20, 2001**

The meeting of the Human Rights Commission took place at the Jefferson Cutter House, One Whittemore Place, and Arlington on Wednesday, June 20, 2001. The meeting was called to order at 8:04 PM

### Commissioners in Attendance:

Sheri Baron  
 Marissa Briggett  
 Christine Carney  
 Christine P. Deshler  
 Esther Kingston-Mann  
 Christopher W. Kita  
 Kevin McGann  
 Susan P. McHugh  
 A. Nick Minton  
 Roger Rosen  
 Nancy Sweeney  
 James Webster

### Guests:

Stephen Gilligan

### Absent:

William Shea

Sheri Baron called the regular meeting of the HRC to order at 8:07 PM.

### Minutes

The minutes for the May 2001 meeting were accepted as amended.

For the final minutes to be posted on the Town's website the minutes need to be sent to Bob Sprague. A copy of the final minutes still needs to be sent to the Library.

### Complaints and Incidents

There were no complaints or incidents reported during the month of May.

### Boy Scout Issue

Stephen Gilligan came to update the commission on the issue of membership, discrimination and the Boy Scouts on a local level. He informed the group that locally the Boy Scout troops that make up the Patriot District of the Boston Minuteman Council do not discriminate. He is responsible for membership and work applications and he would not deny a person membership or an opportunity to work with the Scouts because of their sexuality.

According to Stephen a person would be denied membership or a job if their actions or activities went against the basic principals/teachings of the BSA.

On July 19, 2001 the Districts that make up the Boston Minuteman Council will meet and at that meeting it will be recommended that there be a policy that sets aside National's policy with regards to membership and lets the local Districts/Councils decided whether or not a person's sexuality be an issue in deciding membership. Stephen has reassured the group that we will receive a copy of any policy relating to this issue.

Stephen also informed us that the Town as well as two elementary schools is a chartering sponsor for a Boy Scout troop. The Explorer Post 911 that is a troop made up of older teens and young adults both male and female. It was discussed that we will probably need to send a letter to the Town informing them that the Town cannot be a sponsor for a group that discriminates. It was decided that we would wait until after the July 19th BSA meeting before sending a letter. All agreed that a clear statement needed to be made that the Town does not associate with groups that discriminate.

Sheri read to the group an e-mail received from Joani LaMachia, School Committee Chair, in which she states that after discussing our letter regarding the two elementary schools being sponsors for the BSA with Kay Donovan it was decided that they would wait until September to discuss and act on the issue with the entire School Committee. It was suggested that in the meanwhile we should find out from the DOE what if anything has been done to school departments in other cities/towns who have not complied with the DOE rules with regards schools sponsoring groups that discriminate.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

The Rules & Regulations sub-committee reported that they have met twice and are currently in the process going through all of the past minutes and will incorporate into the Rules and Regulations any item voted on that changes the original R&Rs. When this is completed the commission will be given updated copies of the R&Rs.

The Dialogue sub-committee reported that the recent dialogue on Racial Profiling had a good turn out and was very informative.

For the upcoming fall dialogue on Sexual Harassment and Children the sub-committee has met with members of the Safe Schools Task Force and they are willing to be a co-sponsor for this event. The details for this event still need to be worked out. The sub-committee will be meeting on June 28th and again before the regular July 18th meeting at 7:30 P.M. The possible dates for this dialogue are October 11 or 18.

Henry Louis Gates has agreed to come on Thursday, November 8 to read from and discuss his book, Colored People: A Memoir. It was suggested that we organize a Community Read for this event. A Community Read is when established book groups and book groups established for just this event read and discuss the same book. Christine, Marlissa, Nancy, Chris K. and Chris D. have volunteered to work on organizing the Community Read.

The topic for the January 2002 dialogue is "Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Biased Messages in Children's Media. The focus would be pre-school to 3rd grade. The dialogue will include a showing of a video "The Mickey Mouse Monopoly" and Diane Levin has agreed to be the speaker for this event. The Safe Schools Task Force, the Arlington Family Connection and Parent Educational Network will possibly be involved with this dialogue.

### **Strategies to Diversify the Commission**

A discussion on what we can do to assist the appointing bodies with diversifying the commission and raising public awareness of the commission. From this discussion it was suggested that we should:

- Give appointing bodies candidates for appointment.
- Give an introduction and information about the commission before each Dialogue.
- Continue with a presence at Town Day.
- Place an ad in the newspaper when there is an opening on the commission.
- Invite members of the appointing bodies to attend a meeting.
- Compile a list of potential candidates for appointment to be contacted when an opening occurs.

Each commissioner should come to the next meeting with a few names of potential candidates.

### **New Business**

Town Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 15th. A sign up sheet for volunteers will be available at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Christine C. Carney

