

**Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes
October 26, 2011**

Present: Marlissa Briggett, Christine Carney, Ellen Caulo, Stacey Davison, Gary Horowitz, Chair Nancy Rhoads, Bill Shea, Robin Varghese

Absent: Sheri Baron, Jorge Loayza, Nick Minton, Nancy Sweeney, Suzie Talukdar

Superintendent Kathy Bodie –

There was discussion about the AHRC school liaison program, including whether to allow Commissioners to serve as school liaisons to their own communities. After the letter introducing the program has been sent to principals, commissioners will get in touch with their assigned schools.

Regarding diversity training, Ms. Bodie indicated that she believed diversity training would be important for all teachers and staff, not just administrative staff that had been identified by Commission. She noted that principals are open to such training but the problems is that there is not much time for extended trainings. Ms. Bodie indicated that the Visions training used in Winchester is effective but is extensive. She asked whether the Commission would be able to help identify shorter trainings that may be worthwhile. There was discussion regarding whether a program could be piloted at one school, whether training in summer was a good possibility, etc. Ms. Bodie indicated that she was open to providing in-district professional development credits for teachers who elect to take diversity training.

Chair Rhoads indicated that the Commission's focus on training for administrators was to focus on systemic issues.

There was a discussion around a Needs Assessment Survey to determine the focus of the training. Ms. Bodie indicated that there have been many issues of incivility from parents. She indicated that a focus on defusing incivility may be appropriate.

Review of September Minutes –

Minutes accepted as amended

Subcommittees –

Each subcommittee should meet in the near future, identify a chair and begin to develop plans and set goals. The subcommittees will each meet immediately preceding the next monthly meeting at 7:00 at the Whittemore Robbins House.

Reports –

A. Chair Rhoads and Ms. Talukdar attended the monthly meeting in Boston for parents of students in the Metco program. Also present were High School Principal Mary Villano, an assistant principal and 2 house deans. According to Chair Rhoads, it was a very good meeting. One of the deans discussed what's happening in the schools, in particular a new program Constructing Acceptance Project (CAP) which

is multifaceted program involving 58 high school students (30 of whom are in the Metco program) and some individuals from Lesley College. The program is multi-media and includes dance, an art installation, classes in leading conversations.

It was noted that students do not like to be labeled as “Metco students.” A better reference is “students in the Metco program.” There was a discussion that the friends and family program should be reinstated. It seems that it may be helpful for even some high school students to have a family in Arlington who can serve as a nearby family resource after school.

B. Joan Rova (spelling?) will chair the Response Coordination Team which was spearheaded by the AHRC. A statement about the team is being finalized and will be sent to team members. It will also be forwarded to the Board of Selectman and the School Committee for proclamations in support of the team. Chair Rhoads mentioned it might be helpful for a commissioner to write something up for the paper about the team.

Consideration of HRC Award

Tabled until next month’s meeting.

Miscellaneous

The Commissioners voted unanimously to donate books to the library in Marylynn Carnell’s name as a sign of appreciation for her contributions to the Commission for many years before her recent retirement.

Talking points for the school liaisons will be developed.

Motion to adjourn was made and approved.

Submitted by:
Marlissa Briggett
Commissioner