

**Arlington Human Rights Commission**  
**3/21/18 -- Meeting Minutes**  
**Jefferson Cutter House, 611 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA 02474**  
**8:00-9:30 p.m.**  
**Naomi Greenfield and David Swanson, Co-Chairs**

**Present:** Co-Chairs Naomi Greenfield and David Swanson, Commissioners Sharon Grossman, Christopher Huvos, Christine Carney, Gary Horowitz, D'ondria Maxwell, Sheri Baron, Kristina Fontanez, Betsy Carlton-Gysan

**Absent:** William Logan, Nick Minton

**Guests:** Vinayak Hosagrahara

Co-Chair Greenfield convened the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

**1. Check-in / Meeting Roles:**

- Secretary - Commissioner Carlton-Gysan
- Time-Keeper - Commissioner Maxwell
- Next-Stepper - Co-chair Greenfield

**2. Citizens Open Forum:**

Arlington resident Vinayak Hosagrahara introduced himself. He learned of AHRC at Town Day and is attending to learn more about its work

**3. New Commissioner Update:**

The newest Commissioner has met with the Town Manager and should have gone before the Board of Selectmen for approval on 3/19/18.

**4. Minutes Approval:**

Commissioner Horowitz moved to approved 2/15/18 minutes as amended. Commissioner Baron seconded. Commissioners Carlton-Gysan and Fontanez abstained and all others voted in favor.

**5. Correspondence/Incidents/Complaints:**

- Capitol Theatre incident:  
An Arlington resident notified the AHRC that she had been treated poorly at the Capitol Theatre over President's Day weekend. The Latina woman felt that her ethnic background was a factor in her treatment. Co-chair Greenfield spoke with the woman and, separately, with the Capitol Theatre manager about the incident. The manager ascribed the woman's treatment to a hectic evening due to the popularity of the film being shown. The resident was presented the opportunity to file a complaint and decided against it at this time.

The Commission has been notified of multiple complaints against area businesses in recent months. It discussed potential steps to both deal with these issues in a more consistent way and to educate businesses to prevent future issues from occurring. Co-chair Greenfield is exploring mediation training for Commissioners and best practices for working with complainants. She will bring updates on both to the Commission. Commissioner Carney mentioned a best practices for businesses brochure that had been developed by AHRC. She will explore reprinting and sharing that with local businesses.

- Feb. 21 police incident:  
Arlington Police notified AHRC that a racial slur was discovered on the bike path. The graffiti was documented and then painted over. This is an ongoing investigation and police will keep AHRC notified of progress.
- Pick a Bale of Cotton Email:  
Commissioner Carlton-Gysan spoke with an Arlington resident about the performance of the song Pick A Bale of Cotton at Peirce's 2017 spring concert. The resident had reached out to the school to voice concern and offered to meet on how the school can be more culturally sensitive in the future. She was unhappy with the school's response. The resident shared a video of the song and correspondence with Commissioner Carlton-Gysan, who shared them with the rest of the Commission. The Commission plans to reach out to both Peirce and the school district on how to prevent such missteps in the future. Commissioner Carlton-Gysan will follow up with the resident about filing a complaint.
- Arlington Regional Model UN Club:  
Commissioner Fontanez has been working with Kim Holt, the leader of the Model UN Club which includes students from Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School. The club has elected to focus their yearly large project on racism. They would like to work with AHRC to learn about the issues and explore potential topics. Commissioners Fontanez, Maxwell, Grossman, and Greenfield will work with them. They will attend the 4/10 event, *Recognizing Hate: Why Symbols Matter*.
- Town Manager Phone Call:  
The Town Manager notified the AHRC that racially insensitive content was discovered on a town employee's social media profile. The town is investigating appropriate next steps and will keep AHRC up to date.

#### **Budget Update:**

Commissioners Baron, Swanson, and Greenfield presented the FY2019 budget to the Finance Committee. Response seemed favorable.

#### **Sub-Committee Report Out:**

- **ADL Partnership event:**  
The event sub-committee met on 3/21/18. A draft agenda was shared with the Commission and met with approval. Outreach was discussed. Registration is currently at 49 and expectations are that there will be approximately 125 registrants by the event.
- **Communications:**  
Co-chair Swanson and Commissioner Carlton-Gysan shared their discussion about options for expanding AHRC's Communications. Commissioner Huvos expressed interest in participating. *The sub-committee will meet before the April meeting and all commissioners are invited to join.*
- **Schools & School liaisons:**  
Commissioner Grossman updated the Commission. The School Committee would like to discuss the draft guidelines on responding to hate incidents and AHRC school liaisons at the same time. The Commission discussed the roles of the liaisons. *Commissioner Grossman will summarize her notes from her discussions with the School Committee, share them with the Commission, and determine next steps.*
- **Annual Fall Event:**  
Commissioner Carney moved to move this item to the next AHRC meeting. Commissioner Horowitz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Education and Training:**

- **Cultural Competency training:**  
The Commission attended Cultural Competency Training held by the Arlington Department of Health and Human Services. Several noted the value of engaging in this training with representatives of other Arlington entities, including Arlington Police Department, The Robbins Library, HHS, and AYCC. General feedback was quite positive, though some expressed interest in having more time with the material. *Co-chair Swanson will share the soft copy materials with the Commission.*
- **Mediation training:**  
The Commission discussed whether a similar Mediation training would be valuable. General consensus was positive but that we would like more information. *Commissioner Greenfield will follow up.*

#### **Community events and info:**

- **Robbins Library Arlington Reads Together follow-up:**

The Robbins Library has been hosting a Reads Together series about the book Wonder by R.J. Palacio. They have requested help publicizing their event, “WONDER”: THE CHALLENGE OF DIFFERENCE.

- ACA Immigration Exhibit follow-up:  
The final exhibit has been postponed to the fall. The Commission will help publicize it.

**Next steps:**

- The Commission discussed moving the scheduled April 11 AHRC meeting to another date in April. Co-chair Greenfield will circulate a Doodle poll.

Commissioner Carney moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Horowitz seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.