



Arlington Human Rights Commission Semi-annual Retreat Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday September 26, 2020,

Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Notice to the Public on meeting privacy In the interests of preventing abuse of videoconferencing technology (i.e. Zoom Bombing) all participants, including members of the public, wishing to engage via the Zoom App must register for each meeting and will notice multi-step authentication protocols. Please allow additional time to join the meeting. Further, members of the public who wish to participate without providing their name may still do so by registering to receive the meeting info and using the telephone dial-in information provided.

Please read Governor Baker's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provision of Open Meeting Law for more information regarding virtual public hearings and meetings:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-order-march-12-2020/download>

Attendees: Co-chairs Grossman and Bauer, Commissioners Minton, Rogers, Haynes, Pusey, Soneja, Brown, Jolin, Horowitz

Interns Tessa Erbe, Annika Benn

Minutes

Meeting called to order at 1:00pm by Co-chair Bauer

1. Review

- a. Things done well
 - i. Only one missed meeting due to COVID-19
 - ii. Proactive re BLM issues
 - iii. Streamlined the statement process
 - iv. Ability to make statements without losing core responsibilities
- b. Things to improve upon
 - i. Choosing priorities, workload distribution
 - ii. Appoint a media spokesperson
 - iii. Be more proactive, move beyond statements
 - iv. Involve more people from the outside with HRC
 - v. Shine a light on issues even if we can't solve them
 - vi. Monthly meetings can be elongated?
 - vii. Add summaries so we can work on issues between meetings
 - viii. Work on a method for better group participation

- ix. Formulate core guiding principles
2. Session 1 Governance: Led by Commissioner Kathy Rogers
- a. Rogers: Are we exercising the powers we have? Do we need more powers that we don't have? Inviting long term commissioners to provide an historical perspective
 - i. Horowitz: some powers have never been exercised
 - ii. Baron: We have tried mediation, request documents, wanted subpoena powers, but not always granted
 - b. Lots of discussion about complaints, ability to intervene on issues when no specific complaint received
 - c. What are the instances where the HRC can intervene with no complaint?
 - d. What if the commission is comprised of members who lack specific training/skills regarding mediation, review of laws etc.?
 - e. Do we have a checklist of what's required when investigating incidents?
 - f. Do we always have jurisdiction on personnel issues, other town bodies such as the HCA?
 - g. Create a procedure in place for checklist to investigate incidents & complaints (these are 2 separate categories)
 - h. Advocate for more funds to facilitate investigations with skilled people who may be outside the commission?
 - i. Proposal to create a WG to work on bylaws/procedures
3. Session 2: Led by Commissioner Drake Pusey
- a. Provided broad categories for the work of the Commission: Leadership, Governance, Information, Connection. Adding a 5th component to each: consoling/comforting
 - b. Breakout groups to discuss, generate ideas around these issues
 - c. Back to main group: specific Commissioners spoke about discussion with each group
 - d. Leadership: liaisons to different Town entities to provide a 2-way link
 - e. Governance: the how, the why, need to have connections with outreach in the AHS, those who work in Town, pass through Town, homeless populations
 - f. Information: transparency about statistics, add questions to the Envision Arlington survey, educate people on what deserves to be reported. do a better job of marginalized groups. be specific to center the groups being addressed by statements. the HRC should be speaking for the underdog even if that is speaking against the Town entity
 - g. Connection: highlight diversity series in the Advocate. online version, Patch, FB, Your Arlington
 - h. Consolidation: Most common ideas revolved centering around marginalized communities, the HRC should function as the minority report
4. Priorities for the next year
- a. Increase Knowledge
 - b. Magnify impact
 - c. Governance changes
 - d. Create guidelines
5. Breakout groups discussed different options

- a. Group 1: Balance between maximizing impact & realistic expectations in reach-liaisons. Outreach: how to make the incidents more efficient. Responding to an incident is valuable outreach.
- b. Group 2: Letting people know we exist. the HRC needs a presence on the Town website. Also need to ensure the why is propagated. We have to work towards engagement towards the protected classes. List recent accomplishments to highlight the work of the HRC
- c. Group 3: Make sure the structure is solid, involves looking at the bylaws - highlight the purpose of the Commission, the role and also individually. Also establish an AHRC club at AHS
- d. Group 4: Establish a branding strategy, building connections with liaisons

Summary of groups

- We have to be realistic in creating goals for the next year
- We should identify 2 goals for the next year