



Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes

Date: Wednesday March 17, 2021

Time: 8:00 PM- 10:00 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 Pusey and Jolin, Commissioners Rogers, Haynes, Grossman, Soneja, Brown, Bauer, Minton, Horowitz, Carney, Carey

Absent: Commissioner Baron

DEI Office - Jillian Harvey, Christina Coleman

Interns: Annika Benn, Tessa Erbe

APD representative: Captain Sean Kiernan

Community Members: Tia Harrison, Andy Rubinson, Beth Melofchick, Rebecca Gruber

Meeting called to order at 8:00 pm by Co-chair Pusey
Land acknowledgement by Co-chair Jolin

1. Review of Minutes
 - a. Amend section 5 to read “teach-ins”
 - b. Amend section 6a to read “Some residents in town have lived in Myanmar” and “Some students from Myanmar have studied in our area”
 - c. *Motion to approve minutes as amended* by Commissioner Soneja and seconded by Commissioner Brown, *passed with unanimous approval*
2. Review of Community Input from February 2021 meeting
 - a. The expiration and term dates of the commissioners are now on the AHRC website
 - b. The Alewife Brook Parkway incident is under independent investigation, and one officer involved in the incident is currently on administrative leave
3. Co-chair Report
 - a. Co-chairs met with chief police (Alewife Brook Case and Summer programming), Town Commission chairs (Rainbow commission addressed potential issues with the Boston Pride organization), and Town Manager
 - b. Co-chair Pusey reported on the AHRC’s Incident reporting system to the Needham HRC (Feb 25) and presented Land Acknowledgement Warrant article to school committee (March 11)
 - c. The commission received positive feedback concerning the AHRC’s statement about the Myanmar Coup and Indian Farmers statement
4. Working Group Q&A
 - a. Bylaws - Commissioner Rogers reported goals to carry through with the proposed changes to the bylaws and to continue to evaluate the Commission's process and procedures to ensure transparency
 - b. Events - Commissioner Haynes reports goals to execute at least 6 events this year, create a media management program, and reorganize the system and workflow within events.
 - c. Schools and Education - Commissioner Grossman reports goals to increase work with the school committee, provide resources and address racial disparities and school crime issues, and to continue their work with the AHRC High School interns
 - d. Housing Working Group - Commissioner Carney reports goals of increasing their work with other town working groups (disability, rainbow), focusing on housing discrimination and providing resources for prevention focus on housing discrimination
 - e. Outreach - Co-Chair Pusey reports goals to improve and increase translation resources, improve web page and establish more communication with those vulnerable to housing discrimination
 - f. Indigenous People - Co-Chair Pusey reports goals for Indigenous Peoples’ day, land acknowledgments and native imagery
 - g. Communications - Commissioner Brown reports goals to expedite website issues and improve the website, and maintain momentum on Newsletter

- h. Co-chair goals - Co-Chair Jolin reports the co-chairs will streamline infrastructure (socials, emails, documents), increase involvement of other commissioners and demonstrate more impact in community with more transparency (finalizing incidents, boost event participation)
- 5. DEI Division Updates (Jillian Harvey)
 - a. Racial Equity employee training continuing bi-weekly
 - i. DEI coordinator, Jillian Harvey, completed Racial Equity 101 training for AYCC and is coordinating training distribution to more people with Town Counsel
 - b. Budget - The AHRC has \$4,700 left to spend in the general fund before June 30th deadline
 - i. The AHRC will look into monetarily co-sponsoring events at Robbins Library. The AHRC will vote on co-sponsorship and budget/proposal in the next monthly meeting.
 - c. School Construction Images
 - i. AHS building project images were updated to reflect a more inclusive student body (<https://ahsbuilding.org/at-a-glance/construction-progress/>)
- 6. Proposed Statements
 - a. State Bills regarding hate crimes – Commissioner Bauer
 - i. Commissioner Bauer attend the Massachusetts Human Right Commission (MHRC) meeting, and reported on the bills presented:
 - 1. House bill 1263, Senate bill 721, SD 972 is proposed to redefine the meaning and statues of hate crimes (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/SD721>)
 - 2. HD 334 and SD 214, which reforms anti-racist, equity, and justice education in MA schools (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/HD334>, <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/SD2014>)
 - ii. The AHRC will revisit these bills at the April monthly meeting to take further action.
 - b. Atlanta Incident - AAPI hate crimes
 - i. AHRC discussed that there have been 3,800 incidents of hate crimes since March of 2020 and the GA officer's statements denying racial motivation to attacks on the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community
 - ii. Jillian Harvey of the DEI office is building programming about Atlanta hate crimes into Town of Arlington employee trainings
 - iii. Events Working Group proposes event to confront Atlanta hate crimes and to spread awareness about AAPI discrimination
 - iv. *Motion to write statement and create event* by Commissioner Bauer and seconded by Commissioner Haynes, *passed with unanimous approval*
- 7. Community Input
 - a. Beth Melofchik:

- i. Introduced 2 warrant articles: 78 - about APS education of anti-racist education (with curriculum surrounding Prince Hall, Juneteenth etc) and 89 - for the Arlington tree canopy to be recognized as a public health resource as air pollution leads to higher COVID mortality rates, impact on marginalized neighborhoods and leads to underinvestment in communities
- b. Rebecca Gruber:
 - i. Seconds Melofchik's points about the Tree Canopy as it is a human rights issue, suggests the possibility of a subcommittee dedicated to climate issues in the future
- c. Andy Rubinson
 - i. Co-Chair of the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Committee, raises awareness of the Boycott against Boston Pride Committee because of missteps that were racist/discriminatory towards its members

8. Incidents

- a. Ottoson Zoom Bombings
 - i. Zoom links were shared, and Ottoson classrooms were "bombed" with racist and homophobic language. Nobody has been recognized as responsible.
 - ii. A detective is following up on the Ottoson case and administrative subpoenas were sent to track the IP addresses of the students
- b. Pierce BLM Sign
 - i. Pierce BLM sign was vandalized for a second time, AHRC has offered to pay for a sign replacement but has not received a response
 - ii. APD does not have further updates on this case
- c. Alewife Brook Case
 - i. Captain Kiernan of the APD provided updates on the status of the investigation: interviews are concluding, and reassures every aspect of the case will be investigated.
 - ii. AHRC investigates how, and when to respond, as the investigation is currently ongoing. The Commission is looking into conveying their support through organizations like the Civilian Police Advisory Board Study Committee and open community meetings.
- d. Captain Kiernan provides an update on APD training including a new session titled Cross Cultural Dialogue. He also reported that the APD has a yearly biased based profiling review by taking statistical data of license tracking
- e. Commissioner Soneja asks APD to publicly confront issues of sign thefts and the APD says they will look into the issue. AHRC will bring up this issue at the Chief Committee meeting

9. Warrant Article review for relevance to AHRC

- a. Tentative list of articles relevant to AHRC: 3, 12, 13, 15, 17, 21, 22, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 55, 70, 78, 79, 83, 85, 86, 89, 90, 91
- b. AHRC will vote on which articles to support in the next meeting
- c. AHRC will focus on those that have clear human rights impact

10. Announcements

- a. March Coffee Chat Update – Commissioners Pusey and Rogers

- i. No attendees registered
- b. Ethics Training – to be completed by April 1, 2021
 - i. All commissioners must complete Ethics training
- c. April Incident Handling – Commissioner Horowitz
- d. Coffee Chat – Commissioners Soneja and Horowitz
- e. MAHRC update – Commissioner Bauer
 - i. The MAHRC meeting covered the new Director of Racial Justice Initiatives and a new incident form which will be shared with the Commission
 - ii. Fair housing and legislation event planned for May 7

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Soneja, seconded by Commissioner Bauer, passed with unanimous approval