



Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes

Date: Tuesday May 18, 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, Grossman, Soneja, Bauer, Minton, Horowitz, Carney, Carey

Absent: Commissioners Brown, Haynes

DEI Office: Jillian Harvey, Christina Coleman

Interns: Annika Benn, Tessa Erbe

APD Representative: Chief Flaherty

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

Land acknowledgement by Co-chair Jolin

Agenda

1. Review of Minutes
 - a. Amend section 6a to read "\$400"
 - b. Amend section 7b to clarify "original budget"
 - c. Amend section 8a to read "ad hoc working group will write newsletter articles and take other steps"
 - i. *Motion to approve minutes as amended by Commissioner Grossman and seconded by Commissioner Horowitz, passed with unanimous approval*
 - ii. *Motion to read Emergency Meeting minutes first by Commissioner Grossman and seconded by Commissioner Rogers, passed with unanimous approval*
 - d. Amend role call in executive minutes, and spelling in section 4
 - i. *Motion to approve executive minutes as amended by Commissioner Bauer and seconded by Commissioner Soneja, passed with unanimous approval*

2. Review of Apr. Community Input - No updates
3. Co-chair Report
 - a. Meetings
 - i. Co-chairs completed monthly meeting with APD Chief Flaherty, weekly meeting with Town Manager, and monthly meeting with other town commissions.
 1. Commissions meeting: Rainbow commission discussed possibilities for 2021 Pride events
 2. Chief of Police meeting: discussed gun control in September – APD in support of organizing a buy-back program in Arlington
 - b. Westborough DEI
 - i. Town of Westborough reached out to AHRC to assess equity and inclusion ideas for their town. Westborough DEI office connected with Jillian Harvey of the Arlington DEI office.
 - c. Return to in-person meetings
 - i. Governor Charlie Baker has lifted COVID-19 restrictions in the state of MA
 - ii. Arlington Town Manager to assess Arlington's return to in person meetings, in person meetings may be permitted beginning June 15th.
 - d. September Retreat
 - i. AHRC retreat planned for September 2021 (specific date TBD)
 1. Police presence at AHRC meetings
 2. Town survey results
 3. Revisit AHRC bylaws
4. Working Group Q&A
 - a. Schools and Education WG updates on summer program for future AHRC interns
 - b. Outreach WG updates on town survey data, a pamphlet about discrimination, and is working on finding translation resources
 - c. Events WG will need a new lead – volunteers to reach out to co-chairs
 - d. Communications WG also needs new members to help with technology
 - i. Possible support from high school students
5. DEI Division Updates
 - a. No updates on town-guidance for in person meetings
 - b. Plan to work with other town/cities to establish DEI task groups in order to create a “DEI Guide” is making progress
 - c. A program for Stand Against racism and related training will be done by the end of the year
 - i. Eco-week partner program was successful
 - ii. Upcoming events on June 15 and July 13 - importance of listening and equity
 - d. Elevating Arlington Voices of Color is picking back up with more artist talks and BIPOC workshops
 - e. Interviews for DEI office within APS are ongoing
6. Statements
 - a. Human Rights Discussion – Palestine/Israel
 - i. Co-Chair Jolin presents that the Palestine/Israel conflict is a human rights issue and requests the AHRC makes a statement of support to Arlington community who has been affected by the conflict
 1. AHRC to request action from the U.S., EU, and UN to advocate for peace and human rights and send support to all people facing violence in the Middle East.
 2. Statement should be bipartisan
 3. Ad hoc meeting to be scheduled to review and approve statement by full commission

- a. *Motion to form small group to draft statement about Palestine/Israel conflict and human rights issues by Commissioner Grossman and seconded by Commissioner Carey and Bauer, passed with unanimous approval*
 - ii. Commissioner Soneja, Carey, and Grossman volunteer to draft the statement as part of the small group

7. Community Input – None

8. Incidents

- a. May Incident
 - i. 5 incidents
 - 1. AHRC Incident report - Resident walking by Spy Pond and someone yelled “thanks for the virus”
 - a. AHRC reached out, not reported to APD
 - 2. Harassment case - Contractor harassed client over the phone
 - a. Connected with AHRC and reported to APD
 - 3. Arlington Recreation Department - Graffiti found in a Porta-Potty
 - a. Reported to APD, graffiti removed by company
 - 4. Similar graffiti incident at OMS, non-emergency online report to APD
 - 5. Vandalized car in parking lot, perpetrator made racially and discriminatory charged comments towards victim in the past
 - a. Reported to APD
 - a. Incident Follow up
 - i. Chief Flaherty reports on incidents
 - 1. Spy Pond incident was not reported to APD
 - 2. APD involved in Harassment Case and victim has been offered additional support
 - 3. APD was notified in the Arlington Rec incident, graffiti removed
 - 4. APD was notified by non-emergency number in OMS graffiti incident
 - 5. Suspect in car vandalism incident willingly went to the hospital with APD for evaluation
 - ii. Chief Flaherty expresses full support for firearm buyback programs and another potential buyback in September 2021 partnering with AHRC
 - iii. APD partnering with policing project at NYU School of Law with a goal to increase representation of women in law enforcement
 - iv. APD reached out to the Matthew Shepard Foundation, an LGBTQ+ program, and they offered training to law enforcement to investigate hate crimes, will train APD
 - v. Bystander training at Georgetown University, APD needs 4 letters of community support and requests that AHRC writes a letter of support
 - vi. Mobile Training Center with Middlesex Sheriff's Office for de-escalation training
 - vii. Professional Standards Investigation/Review: Feb. 10 2021
 - 1. APD hired an independent investigator and it was concluded that there was no evidence of racial profiling or use of excessive force.
 - 2. Chief Flaherty cannot report the specific level of discipline (MA public policy).
 - b. Commissioner Soneja requested status on following incidents: Zoom bombing at AC, virus harassment at Walgreens, harassment against person of Japanese descent, Everything is Free follow up, stealing of racial justice signs
 - i. Chief Flaherty says there have been many reports of Zoom bombing, and that they traced an IP address to Turkey.
 - ii. Update on the Everything is Free Facebook incident
 - 1. APD has been made aware of this FB group
 - c. Commissioner Soneja brought up an incident of harassment in an apartment complex, AHRC

has been keeping in touch with the victim and was requesting help for a mediator in breakage management of her lease. However, the Commission decided it is best to direct the victim to experts on this issue.

9. Announcements
 - a. Intern status
 - i. AHRC thanks interns for their work over the past year as they finish their work with the AHRC
 - b. May Coffee Chat Update
 - i. Commissioner Jolin and Haynes met for May coffee chat
 - ii. One person joined to discuss housing in Arlington
 - c. June Incident Handling – Commissioner Grossman
 - d. June Coffee Chat – Commissioners Brown and Minton
 - e. MAHRC – Commissioner Bauer (No updates)
 - f. Chief’s Advisory Council – Commissioner Grossman
 - i. Discussed new legislation and the positive effects on policing, and had a conversation about school resource officers
 - g. Civilian Review Board Exploratory Committee – Commissioner Rogers
 - i. Commissioner Carey proposes adding the question of how the review would work with other entities in Arlington

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Minton and seconded by Commissioner Rogers, *passed with unanimous approval*

Next meeting: June 16, 2021, 8:00 pm, Remote Participation.

Anyone needing accessibility information or other assistance to attend this meeting should contact Jillian Harvey, jharvey@town.arlington.ma.us. This meeting is open to all interested individuals.