

# Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

**February 20, 2020 – Conference Room- Town Hall – 6:30- 8:00 pm**

Chairman Kevin Merritt called meeting to order at 6:30.

In attendance at the meeting were:

Kevin Merritt  
Lindsay Beal  
Pat Kilty  
Sheila Ryder  
Robert Bardell  
Donna Gaffey  
Cailin Kennedy  
Jane Francis

Guest speaker: Maureen Canova, Director of Senior Center.

First order of business approval of minutes of January 23, 2020.

Kevin Merritt introduced Maureen Canova, Director of Senior Center of Stoneham. Maureen described to the group that at the Senior Center the focus is on programs, making them accessible with no barriers. One of the biggest obstacles to this is transportation and financial constraints. The Senior Center Staff try's to bring programs to the center that are outside of the norm, such as LGBTQ community programs and MA Council on Aging, being inclusive while making seniors comfortable, Looking to take programs offsite at the Housing Authority.

Maureen went on to discuss the demographics served at the Senior Center with the average age being 75+, some of the programs include Men's group, Walking group, Aerobics, Zumba, card groups, cribbage and coffee & conversation. Socialization is the biggest draw and the opportunity to make new friends. The Center utilized both online and print resources to reach out to seniors producing a newsletter online and in print and mailing out to seniors in the community.

As part of the mission of the Senior Center, the staff must be aware that people may feel uncomfortable and it is important to identify needs before they become a problem. Once a need is identified the Senior Center can assist in providing resources for such issues as Dementia, Grandparents raising Grandchildren. MVES (Mystic Valley Elder Services), money managers, education and awareness of fraud and identity theft. Visits from the Police Department and Assessors Office, providing information on programs such as debt reduction, 41C Exemption. The messaging is important to relay "are you safe" and how can we help versus other language.

After a discussion was held with HRC members and Maureen Canova looking to find ways that the HRC may be able to help the Center. HRC members suggestions were Volunteer group to go into Senior Center, Life history project- intergenerational involve kids. Discussion was also held on concerns of reaching more people and how it could be accomplished. Upcoming event Stoneham 101 at the library how we could be represented or present. In addition, Maureen informed us of a program going on directly after Stoneham 101 to discuss Stoneham and Age Friendly challenges, a representative from UMASS Amherst Gerontology will be present.

Ideas for events for future events were discussed including a September volunteer day, reaching out to the Stoneham High Gay/Straight Alliance and possible Prom event, reaching out to sponsor an event for the LGBTQ community to have possible ice cream social.

Next meeting scheduled for March 19, 2020 to allow HRC members to attend the SAAV comedy night scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion continued around the Contact or Resource, list and continuing to both revise and expand. Website needs refresh and will require further discussion.

Motion to adjourn Jane Francis, Cailin Kennedy seconded.

At approximately 7:45 Chair accepted motion to adjourn.