

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2020 – Remote Meeting – 6:30-8:30 pm

REMOTE PARTICIPATION MEETING

Conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen.L.c.30A &20, et seq., and 940 CMR29.01, et seq.

In response to Governor Baker's declaration of a public health emergency and the related Emergency Executive Order dated March 12, 2020, the Human Rights Commission shall be meeting remotely until further notice. The audioconferencing application Go to Meeting will be used for this purpose. An online link and telephone access number will be provided on all meeting agendas and also on the Human Rights Commission website. This application will permit the public to access and participate in future Human Rights Commission meetings. Instructions for joining meetings in this manner will be provided on the Human Rights Commission website. . We extend our thanks for your understanding in this manner, which is intended to keep members of the Commission safe.

Chairman Kevin Merritt called meeting to order at 6:30. Stating the declarations above and asking all members to identify themselves and their home address.

Online for the meeting were:

Kevin Merritt

Rob Bardell

Lindsay Beal

Pat Kilty

Sheila Ryder

Donna Gaffey

Jane Francis

Select Person Raymie Parker

Chief James McIntyre

Town Administrator Dennis Sheehan

Several members of the Stoneham Community also joined the call, Farah Ridor, Kelsey Montgomery, Nadia Butt, Erica Lane, Anthony Wilson and many other listeners.

After roll call a motion was passed with all members in agreement and the meeting began. This meeting was called to discuss nationwide racial-justice issued and potential action within the town. Several members of the community were in attendance.

Discussion was started in regards to the statement issued earlier in the day from Chief McIntyre regarding the death of George Floyd and actions of the Minneapolis Police. Through this statement the Chief communicated, "Police officers are sworn to protect and serve their communities equally and without prejudice" "The actions of the officers involved in the death of George Floyd in no way represent the values of the Stoneham Police Department." The statement which was published on both the Town and Police websites, included messaging from Town Administrator Dennis Sheehan regarding the importance of the "interactions of Town employees with the community" and he was "

looking forward to dialogue and discussions on the way we in Stoneham can help build a more peaceful and equitable society. “The TA also made mention in the article of the Human Rights Commission formation how he it would provide a residents a safe space to voice their concerns.” Many HRC members thanked them both Chief McIntyre and Town Administrator Sheehan for the publication of the statement.

Discussion began regarding potential action within the Town.

Rob Bardell offered “Temperament something swelling in the Town. We need to direct our energies in a positive way or the other towns temperament around us may spill over. The youth is very charged and positive energy needs to be directed. The message needs to heard and radiated out.”

Pat Kilty stated the statement is a start.

Kevin Merritt mentioned hearing of a student’s having a sit in on the common, and that others had written to him to see what the town would do.

Both the TA and the Chief commented on the event that was to have taken place on the common, it was cancelled by organizer as its presence on social media caused the number of participants to grow larger than planned.

Discussion moved to how to contact HRC, several members had been contacted by residents privately about the town officials statements, events and what the HRC was going to do. TA encouraged people to continue to speak up.

Sheila Ryder spoke to our place, how do we respond, is it our purpose.

Raymie Parker suggested relaying our purpose as an advisory board on our communications, encourage phone calls and messages. Keep momentum w/positive messages. Ensure everybody on same page, and growth for everyone.

At this point several of the community members began offering input:

Farah Ridor – “ I was not aware of the HRC, she echoed what others had said about having a sit- in on Common, stating the statement was a good start but encouraged other action referred to the mural of on the Greenway of George Floyd and maybe chalk works of positivity along the Greenway.

Kelsey Montgomery- Was the group going to follow up s, asked that we articulate what we are working on, such as chalking. Provide data that supports what is in the statement.

Matt Rodriquez suggested a parade of signs, carrying different messages.

Nadia Butt- suggested a moment of silence for 8 minutes 49 seconds, in person or at home.

Rob Bardell of HRC resonated Raymie's message of keeping the momentum going, 'we are uniquely Stoneham. Don't know all the answers... but this is great opportunity.'

Care about Citizens as a whole, we care about our neighbors, reshape our message to support whole community.'

Conversation shifted back to our subcommittees work on neighborhood actions, which Sheila and Lindsay have named "Simply Stoneham", they listed some of the initiatives, Patriotism in Stoneham, community building, movement for a light on.

Farah Ridor returned to conversation and stated there are proactive things we could do and we need to do more, such as a visible demonstration.

Anthony Wilson-"not the time to be safe" and "not doing something is wrong, offering suggestions for Virtual concert, Kindness garden, Statement on Racial Justice.

Subject was raised regarding how to reach the HRC, advised that they check back an email address for HRC would be put up on website, Raymie invited everyone on the call to share their comments in the comment box and to email.

Kevin and Dennis said the HRC would post a press release or letter to the editor.

Motion was made for Kevin to draft a statement, by Jane Francis, seconded by Donna Gaffey.

Roll call vote was held, motion accepted and passed.

Next meeting was scheduled for June 11, 2020.

Motion was made to adjourn by Pat Kilty, second by Lyndsey Beal, roll call vote was held and meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm