

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

July 23, 2020 – Remote Meeting – 6:30-7:40 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, stating the declarations above and asking all members to identify themselves and their home address.

Online for the meeting were:

Kevin Merritt

Rob Bardell

Cailin Kennedy

Lindsay Beal

Pat Kilty

Sheila Ryder

Donna Gaffey

Jane Francis

Select Person Raymie Parker

Residents :Martha Panther Buckley, Erin Bradley, Cory Mashburn, Fred Hemp, Paul Condon Jr., Meg Hemp, Farrah Ridore.

Nicole Langley, Library Director

After roll call a motion was passed with all members in agreement the meeting began at 6:35 pm.

First order of business was to approve the meeting minutes for June 11th, Pat Kilty made motion to approve, Rob Bardell seconded. Roll call vote was held and June 11th minutes approved. Next the minutes from June 25th were brought up for vote, Pat Kilty made the motion to approve, Rob Bardell seconded. Roll call vote was held and June 25th minutes approved.

The subject of the Neighborhood initiative was raised and Sheila R. mentioned Ceramica and their birdhouse event. Also mentioned was the idea of Zoom Book club. Pat Kilty mentioned Stoneham Stands and their signs.

Resident Farrah Ridore spoke of contacting Meghan Day from the Chamber of Commerce and working on two initiatives. A plan to for an outdoor movie nights featuring “Good Trouble with John Lewis”

As well as a voter registration drive. Subject was raised about HRC hearing about an event and promoting it, again Chairman Kevin Merritt reminded that HRC is an advisory board.

Rob Bardell stated we need to open our ideas and listen to ideas- crowdsource-sowing the seed.

Chairman Kevin Merritt approached the positives happening around Stoneham:

Raymie Parker the first African American Select Board Chair.

Raymie talked about coordinating a Book of the Month Club with Nicole Langley, Library Director to continue with education and conversation about racism and events that have taken place.

Nicole stated in conversation with Raymie, they both felt needed to do something more.

Who we are – Who we want to be. How this can be opportunity to address genealogy, different groups, races, give people an opportunity to participate with oral history.

Resident Cory Mashburn mentioned the subcommittee that has been formed by Rachel Meredith Warren and Thomas Dalton ,” Dismantling Structural Racism” and possibility of a member of the HRC participating . Rob Bardell expressed interest.

Discussion turned to the critical incident plan and remind and how to utilize it, 48 hour response, listen to both sides of story, refer to appropriate agency. Residents can attend meetings whether in person or online.

Chairman Merritt acknowledged a recent racially charged incident, a resident received an anonymous letter, and the resident was in attendance and was given the floor.

Erin Bradley described the incident, she had Black Lives Matter signs on her front lawn and received a typed anonymous letter about the signs, making racist comments and telling her to” leave the neighborhood” . The end of the message stated see you around town and seemed threatening.

Erin was looking to see if other members of the community who have put up signs have gotten similar letters. When she posted on Facebook she received many mixed messages, support as well as accusations that the letter was made up.

Corey Mashburn stated he had put “Hate has no home here”: sign on his lawn and also got a letter, at that time, he felt talking about the letter did not go anywhere, the fact he got a letter was accepted.

Raymie Parker acknowledging there is an issue, stated that we need to keep the conversation going, educate and have conversations.

Cory Mashburn stated need to change the culture.

Rob Bardell stated “acknowledge what exists, shine a light to a problem, address what we have to and adapt.”

Discussion turned back to Erin’s letter and the advice which had been passed to her by the Police Department. If anyone receives this type of letter, don’t touch it, place in a plastic bag so it can be examined by the Police.

Chairman brought discussion of New Business, to a vacancy created as Julie Beliveau was moving and stepping down. Asked that we inform other residents to reach out if interested and obtain an application form.

Next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 27th.

Motion to adjourn was made by Pat Kilty, seconded by Rob Bardell, a roll call vote was taken and the meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.