

Human Rights Commission Meeting
Thursday, February 16, 2017
5:45pm, Room 101, Bangs Community Center

Members Present: Matthew Charity, Sid Ferreira, Carol Ross, Jessica Maposa, Emily Boutilier
Absent: Sovann-Malis Loeung, Brenda Mutai, Greg Bascomb, Ingrid Askew
Others Present: Deborah Radway, Director of Human Rights, Elizabeth Cahn, Amherst College student Sophia Maldonado, Police Chief Scott Livingstone, resident Caroline Murray, Reporter Scott Merzbach.

Meeting called to order at 5:53 pm
Agenda Additions: none

Review and Approve Minutes of October and December 2016 (correct spelling of Cahn). No quorum present for January 2017.

Old Business:

1. 5:45 pm Discussion with Police Chief Scott Livingstone regarding Police Department Police Statement on **Immigrant Community Members**, and practices of the Department regarding the same.
 - a) Current policy still in effect. We are a Mass Accredited Police Department, we follow best policing practices nationwide, including our immigrant community members statement.
 - b) We value relationships we have, don't want people to be afraid to call PD for any reason. We don't request information unless they are arrested= then we need to know who they are
 - c) I deal with all requests from ICE personally, and entire department knows that. There is no weakest link argument, because it always comes back to me. We are amongst the highest trained PD's in US.
2. Caroline Murray made presentation about her organization's Sanctuary City petition article. - The definition of what is criminal seems to have expanded with the Trump election. What can we do as a community to maintain the same relationships we have always had? In our bylaw there would never be inquiry as to status upon arrest or any other time. Name yes, status no. The Bylaw will not conflict with law.
 - d) Discussion re implications of ICE sweep in Amherst, what will police reaction be. Chief will want to be present to support immigrants.
 - e) Matthew- the term "Sanctuary City" does not have a clear definition, it has different meanings to different people and organizations. We are a welcoming community.
 - f) Emily- how strong is our policy compared to others? Chief- ours is clear and concise, haven't seen one that is better, but I don't know how strong it is.
 - g) Members present agreed to review and comment on proposed petition language as individuals, and to encourage people to attend Amherst Sanctuary Group upcoming March 4 forum. Members who attend can identify themselves and speak as individuals but not representing the Commission.
3. Discussion of Affirmative Action Plan and Affordable Housing Items were tabled.

New Business:

1. **Citizen request to sponsor Warrant Article Local Voting Rights for Legal Permanent Resident Non-Citizens –Vince O’Connor**
 - a. Vince asked HRC to sponsor this article at Town Meeting. It has been previously approved by past town meetings but has never made it through the legislative cycle. This is to allow non-citizen residents to vote in local elections. Requires state legislature to approve. Commission agreed unanimously to sponsor article.
2. **Remote Participation guidelines** were reviewed.
3. **Discussion- Religious land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act-** referral from Select Board Chair- RLUIPA (Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act) was reviewed. This is an important FYI but requires no HRC action. We cannot allow religious discrimination in land use.
4. **Discussion of education opportunities** and Commission input, including connections with civic organizations Add Educational links to HRC webpage.

Other Business: Any other topics the Chair did not reasonably anticipate 48 hours before the meeting

Announcements- Mill River Pavilion is reserved for the 2017 Human Rights Heroes Picnic on Saturday, June 17 starting at 11am.

Adjourn 7:45pm

Deb Radway

Notetaker