

Human Rights Commission of Newburyport

Meeting Notes

June 1, 2017

Senior Community Center

Meeting: 7:00 pm

Attendance: Chairwoman Kat Preftes, Shawn Flaherty, Peter Blaiwas, Ahmer Ibrahim, Margaret McQuillan, Judy LaCroix, Tom Getz, Kathleen Shaw, Sheila Trieff, and Hannah Wilson

Guests: Steven Chanin, Dr. Hazem Mahmoud, Kevin Larrabee

Call to Meeting: 7:05 pm

Minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Newburyport Community Iftar planning

Ahmer shared that the Iftar was set date for Monday, June 12. It was difficult to find a date that didn't conflict with other city events.

Agenda for the event:

- Opening welcome by the Mayor
- Explanatory introduction to the Iftar
- Video: "Nadia's Ramadan": video made for middle schoolers, but will be informative for everyone.
- Guests are asked to write down any questions about the Muslim faith, Ramadan, etc., and place them in a box from which Kat (or someone else) will pick random questions to be answered toward the end of the event.
- Those who wish to can participate in a Muslim prayer before the break-fast,
- Which will be followed by the break-fast meal.
- Commissioners are encouraged to bring soft drinks and to come early (5 PM) to help set up.

Ad Hoc meeting update on restructuring HRC

New Commission Roles/Chair: As an alternative to Kat Preftes stepping down as chair, Ad Hoc committee members Kat, Tom Getz, Kathleen Shaw and Sheila Trieff met to discuss a more effective distribution of commission duties among the commissioners. Some additional duties are assigned some still need to be filled.

Kat asks that someone oversee the HRC G-Mail account. Ahmer steps up and will start on July 1.

Shawn Flaherty is overseeing the youth subcommittee, tasked with getting students and youth liaisons to take more initiative in the commission's work.

Unanimous kudos are given to Kat for her work as chairperson.

Ad Hoc Committee's restructuring proposal is approved. (See "AD HOC Committee for HRC Organization" at the end of this document.)

HRC FY 2018 Objectives for Advocacy and Events

Judy Lecroix inquires why we take July and August off, especially in the light of current political situation. Reasons include it is difficult to get all commissioners together during summer months, and that it is a time to recharge collective batteries. We schedule a 3-hour August brainstorming session early in the week of August 21 at the Senior Center.

Peter suggests that we seek out other city and area organizations that oversee existing, *well-established* events and offer our assistance to help with or expand those events. Peter will discuss the YWCA MLK day event with Ellie Davis at her Community Task Force meetings, first Wednesday of each month.

Kat met with John Moynihan, director of the Firehouse Center for the Arts, which recently received a grant to promote social justice programs. Moynihan is interested in working with the HRC to implement them. Margaret and Amher volunteered to assist Kat in working with the Firehouse on these programs.

Shawn and Kat met with NBPT school principals to discuss possible events and activities that address multicultural awareness with sensitivity in our city.

The group discusses how to bring the people of NBPT *out* of our city to experience different cultures and economic status. Kathleen suggests all high school kids take a round-trip bus ride to Haverhill to see what it's like for someone in our area who has to rely on public transportation; to see what it's like to feel that *you* are the minority in the group.

Kat suggests that the commission forms a group outreach to surrounding communities, about whether they can use our assistance and how we can be of service. Sheila suggests Global Volunteers website as a reference.

Peter offers to meet with Nancy Earls and Ellie Davis about attempting to work with Kelleher Gardens tenant association. Kat will contact Sue Casey, the chair of the tenant association.

Group agrees to move monthly HRC meeting from the first to the second Thursday of each month at 7 PM. Motion is approved.

Hannah presents the excellent LGBT information display she created to show at the NPL during June, which is Pride month.

Hannah also mentions that there is a sanctuary city meeting occurring at the state house on Friday, June 9, which is open to the public.

Meeting Adjourned 9:10pm

AD HOC Committee for HRC Organization

5/12/17

Present: Tom Getz, Kat Preftes, Kathleen Shaw, Sheila Trieff

- Kat shared an extensive list of her current responsibilities as Chair of HRC. There was discussion whether Kat would consider continuing as Chair if other duties were distributed to HRC commissioners.
- We defined areas of organization that need to be addressed and assigned.

CHAIR: (Kat P.)

Will lead meetings, serve as the primary liaison to the Mayor and City Council, create meeting agendas and send notes of meetings to City Clerk, represent HRC at public events,

SECRETARY: (Beth H.)

Take and circulate minutes of meetings

Agendas (Kat P.)

Scheduling of room (Shawn F.)

TREASURER (Tom G.)

COMMUNITY & SCHOOL LIAISON: (Kathleen S.)

Will be the primary liaison to the Superintendent of Schools, principals of schools, and Newburyport Youth Services, and Friends of Peace.

ADVOCACY & EVENTS: (Point person to be determined)

This committee would manage the interface with Mini-Grants, Peace Prize Events (Kathleen S.), Ramadan program (Ahmer I.), Children's programming for YH (Judy L.), possible future Documentary Film Festival event (Kat P.), Day of Service event (~~Peter B.~~), and Community Read event (TBD).

COMMUNICATIONS: (Point person to be determined, committee includes Ahmer I., Margaret M., and Kat P.)

FaceBook site, (Peter B.), Newspapers (Tom G.) Police Department (Tom G. & Sheila T.), representing HRC at public events (Kat P.), and sending meeting notes to City Hall Clerk (Kat P.), Manage Gmail account and respond to emails (Ahmer I.)

YOUTH SUBCOMMITTEE: (Rose & Shawn F.)

AD HOC MAVEN: (Sheila T.)

FLOATERS: (TBD)