

Human Rights Commission Meeting January 18
Newburyport Senior/Community Center,

Meeting called to order at 7:05 P.M.

Attendance: Kat Preftes, Sheilla Trieff, Tom Getz, Ahmer Ibrahim, Peter Blaiwas, Margaret McQuillan, Shawn Flaherty, Beth Horne

Clergy Liaison: Matt Willis-Goode

School Liaison: Angela Bik

Community Liaison: Kathleen Shaw

Student Reps: Owen Davis, Katherine Goodkind, Caroline Walsh

Public Comment: None

December Minutes approved with changes

School Update: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Angela Bik provided an update on the ELL program. She acts as the ELL Director

The new Family and Community Coordinator-Karina Mascia is also the Assistant Principal at the Bresnahan School. A Brazilian native, she is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese.

In the role of Family Communications Coordinator, she meets with a new family and orients them to the system. She also sets them up to do a home language survey to determine what language is spoken in the home and connects the parents with their child's ELL teacher in the school. The ELL teacher serves as direct liaison with the parent. Principal Mascia works with the family to set medical and dental, sports, after school care, etc. It is important to build trusting relationships (example given of field trips) The ELL program now has 3 full-time teachers.

The schools recently received a small grant with other "low incident population" (less than 100 ELL students) to do some cross-community programming. Through the grant a camp is being offered for the first time during April vacation for the level one and level two ELL (no English or very limited English). Open to K-8 grade and will include students from Amesbury. Hoping older youth will serve as leaders. Transportation-bus provided. Also offering on-line course for teachers on how to teach the new comer who speaks no English. New regulations now are in place for schools to provide bi-lingual education to all students. State is providing 3 years of funding for improving services.

Adult ELL program offered through Newburyport Adult Ed. Twenty-five parents participated last year and another fifteen this year.

A question was asked about how students are reacting to the immigration issue: Bik responded that some families are not willing to talk about the issue while others open

and are quite fearful. The schools position is that they are here to support the students and families.

Possible actions:

- There is a need for “Sponsor families”. They would like to find a way to connect family with an advocate or sponsor family who could be their connection and would answer questions about daily living in Newburyport.
- Immigration concerns within families, perhaps provide support
- Funding for the extra activities is “found” but not budgeted in the schools. Perhaps mini grants?

New Business/Check-In:

Student sub-committee meeting will be before the next general meeting at 6 P.M.

February meeting-Marshall Murray to attend the meeting, Hate crimes vs hate incidents; plate capture.

Immigration subcommittee-City Council meeting-still up in the air.

B. Horne will not attend the February meeting A. Ibrahim will take notes for February.

P. Blaiwas-On April 25th at 7:30 P.M. there is a meeting at the Brown School Gymnasium to consider proposals for the building use as affordable housing. All were encouraged to attend.

K. Goodkind-Attended MLK dinner. Presentation by Brendon Kiely author of “All American Boys”. It was a very well-done event!

Thanks was given to S. Flaherty for his service on the HRC.

General Updates:

“Know Your Neighbor” Documentary film project.

Port Media training-initial training completed.

Practice session scheduled for February 3rd from 9-11 A.M. Location TBD (Senior Center, People’s United Methodist Church, S. Trieff’s office)

Kick-off Event possibly at Riverwalk or the Firehouse or another location. M. Willis-Goode and B. Resnick to host a podcast. Dates considered were February 15 or March 1st.

Action items:

- M. Willis-Goode to identify the location and set the date for the kick off
- K. Shaw to obtain the releases from Youth Services and Port Media
- K. Shaw to pick up the equipment on February 2nd for the practice session on the 3rd.
- T. Getz to invite reporter to be invited to the February 3rd practice run.

Peace Prize-date set for April 23rd

- This week K. Preftes to provide principals with the nomination forms.

Mini-grants-to be given out at the Peace Prize on April 23rd

Grants to be considered include:

Deb Szabo-Anne Frank Memorial Tree
ELL Program funding for scholarships
Holocaust remembrance event

Iftar-Ramadan is May 15-June 14

Tentative date for the Iftar is May 23 or 24

Day of Service-Tentative Date September 15

B. Horne to meet with clergy group on February 13th

Article Series

K. Preftes is writing an article on Presidents Trump use of language to describe African countries and Haiti

P. Blaiwas is writing an article on the changes in health care for LGBTQ persons

M. McQuillan and S. Trieff are possibly writing an article on stereotypes

Clergy group update provided by M. Willis-Goode

Movie on gun violence, "Armor of Light" is being hosted at St. Paul's church for congregations, February 10th

Conversation Cafes are being hosted by the Women in Action Huddle at the Senior Center at 7 P.M.

February 6-Patriotism

March 6-Media

April 3-White Advantage

Meeting Adjourned at 9:02 P.M.