



Human Rights Commission  
Wednesday, September 26, 2018 at 7:00pm  
Lower Meeting Room, Town Hall

**In attendance:** Margaret Adams, Joseph Borsellino, Mayanne Briggs, Deputy Chief Michael Buckley, Will Dashe, Steve Heaslip, Chris Kelly, Amy Lafont, Diane Loud, Russell Poole

**Missing:** Robert Blaney, Lianna Manos, Margaret Matthews

#### **Human Rights Commission Agenda**

- Swearing-In of Commission Members
- Organization of Commission (Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk)
- Discussion Re: Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration
- Discussion Re: Coalition for Transgender Equality
- Discussion Re: Future Meeting Schedule
- Old/New Business

#### **Swearing-In of Commission Members**

At 7:05 Town Clerk Paul Munchbach swore in three members who had not previously been sworn in.

#### **Organization of Commission (Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk)**

At 7:10 Assistant Town Manager Nancy Baker instructed the Commission on how to organize.

Russell Poole nominated Joseph Borsellino to be Chair. All voted in favor.

Chair Borsellino asked for volunteers for Vice Chair and Diane Loud offered. She was nominated and all voted in favor.

Chair Borsellino asked for volunteers for Clerk and Margaret Adams volunteered. She was nominated and all voted in favor. Town Clerk Paul Munchbach offered to send HRC Member Adams template for agendas and explanation of open meeting laws.

Board of Selectmen member Brendan Kehoe spoke to the Commission on behalf of all the members to thank them for their service. He recognized they were going to have much work ahead of them and that the Board of Selectmen will support their efforts.

**Discussion Re: Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration**

Chairman Borsellino noted the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration in January, 2018 was a success with over 500 people attending at Dedham Middle School. There was dinner with food donated by various restaurants and supermarkets and a program including a keynote speaker, dance performances, DHS bands and chorus, and spoken poetry. He noted that School Superintendent Mike Welch is offering to help with space for the 2019 event.

The group discussed at length how to organize the 2019 event. Liveable Dedham has offered to organize tables with information on different volunteer opportunities in town.

**Discussion Re: Coalition for Transgender Equality**

Dedham resident John Kriakis presented the Community Forum on Transgender Equality being held on October 3 at 7:00pm at Temple Beth David in Westwood and asked the Commission to co-sponsor the event, help publicize forum and encourage people to attend. He noted that St. Susannah, Alin Church, the UU church and the Church of the Good Shepherd have all endorsed the event. He said there was no financial ask.

Chairman Borsellino asked more about the location of the event.

Vice Chair Loud asked if the group planned to hold any events on National Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20th. Mr. Kriakis notes that the group's focus is on Question 3 on the November 6th ballot and the October 3rd event was intended to provide information.

Member Steve Heslip said he doesn't think it is a good idea to support the event because he believes it violates other human rights.

Member Russell Poole said he does not support the endorsement because he sees this as a political issue and the Commission should not be involved in politics.

Member Chris Kelly read aloud from the Commission charge that it includes "gender identity" and that this request falls under the purpose of the Commission.

Chairman Borsellino asked Member Heslip if his concerns were religious. Member Heslip replied his concerns were not religious but based on right to privacy. He said a lot of women feel nervous and there is no provision about convicted sex offenders going into bathrooms.

Vice Chair Loud noted her son is transgender and that fact may cloud her response. She does worry about the political effects on everyone in Dedham.

Clerk Margaret Adams said much of human rights is political and some residents of Dedham are members of the LGBTQ community and they don't feel safe. She noted she was a long-time educator and has had students struggle with their orientation and eventually have positive experiences in school that enriched the entire student body.

Member Will Dashe noted that he had done research and found there was no credible threat to safety from the transgender rights law currently in place in Massachusetts.

Member Mayanne Briggs said the School Committee is looking at endorsing the event and is committed to protecting all students in Dedham schools.

Chairman Borsellino noted that who was controversial yesterday is not today.

Member Heslip offered to clarify that he understands there hasn't been any increase in attacks in Massachusetts. He said there is a concern about women being recorded by cameras in bathrooms.

Member Amy Lafont said the proposal is supporting a discussion and that is what the Commission embodies.

Deputy Chief Buckley said he supports the Commission endorsing the forum.

Chairman Borsellino called for a vote. Members Adams, Borsellino, Briggs, Buckley, Dashe, Kelly, Lafont and Loud voted in the affirmative. Members Heslip and Poole voted in opposition.

#### **Discussion Re: Future Meeting Schedule**

The Commission discussed meetings through January leading up to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration. The group agreed to meet on the following dates:

October 17, 2018  
November 14, 2018  
December 12, 2018  
January 9, 2019

#### **Old/New Business**

Assistant Town Manager Nancy Baker explained the purpose of the Old/New Business part of the agenda.

[Note: Notetaker had to leave at 8:30pm]

Notes taken by Allison Staton

Notes reviewed by Heather Springer

Keywords: Human Rights Commission, Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, transgender

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