

**Barnstable County Human Rights Commission
Minutes of April 1, 2009
Barnstable Superior Courthouse
Room 11-12**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairperson Jacqueline Fields, Michael Medeiros, Sherrie Hitchcock, Robert Freedman, Andrew Murray, Rosario Gomez-Wixon, Larry Mahan
Coordinator: Mary Lohan

1. **OPEN** The meeting opened at 7.05pm
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** There was no public comment
3. **MINUTES** The Minutes of March 3, 2009 were adopted as amended.
4. **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** JF reported that the past month has been an exceptionally busy time for her with regard to her HRC activities. Many hours have been put into preparing for the High School Human Rights Academy, preparing the HRC's budget request, preparing the HRC's Annual Report, continuing to collaborate with Mashpee Community Health Center on healthcare disparities, and attending various meetings and hearings. She has again contacted Selectmen from Truro and Provincetown seeking the appointment of new Town Representatives from those towns.
5. **COORDINATOR'S REPORT** ML distributed copies of her report and discussion followed about the upcoming High School Human Rights Academy. Barnstable High School is going to need lots of support and their participation in this year's Academy is a challenge as their teacher has suddenly gone out on maternity leave much sooner than expected. Discussion segued and JF reported that the HRC has received an informal proposal to collaborate with the interfaith community on a Human Rights Academy centering on safety in schools. Larry Brown, Steve Brown and Judge Reardon (Ret.) are leading this effort. When this is properly written as a formal proposal, funding will need to be sought. LM reported that he is aware of a grant being offered by Mashpee students that can perhaps be tapped into. He also suggested having HRA students actually write the RFP for the grant. There will be a planning meeting to discuss how to proceed, JF will email details of the meeting when it is arranged.
6. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - **Commissioner updates**
 - **High School Human Rights Academy** ML reported that she is busy preparing for the upcoming Human Rights Academy to be held on Thursday, April 9th and that preparations are proceeding well. Coordinating this event can be quite challenging considering the scope of the participants and the many variables which have to be taken into account but there have been no major snafus so far. A discussion took place about the lack of diversity among students who participate in the HRA. This will need to be looked at more closely, particularly in the larger

schools such as Barnstable and Mashpee. SB reported that she conducted several school visits for the upcoming HRA and is very impressed with the work being carried out by HRA students.

- **School visits update** ML reported on the schools which have already been visited by Commissioners and/or Town Reps and enlisted volunteers for the few remaining visits to be covered.

- **July Immigrant Celebration – 15 towns** Last year, there were 8 celebrations in 9 towns. This year, the goal is to have 15 celebrations in 15 towns in a show of unity. It was suggested that it may be more feasible to hold regional celebrations as reaching the immigration population may not be easy in some towns. TR reminded the group that the IIWG has held regular planning meetings for two years now regarding the Immigrant Celebration and that it was agreed to aim for the goal of 15 celebrations in 15 towns. The aim of the Immigrant Celebration Program is to foster awareness of the immigrant population on Cape Cod and to show support for them in their own individual towns. Each town can select the time that works best for them within a one-week period from July 4 to July 11, 2009. Commissioners and Town Reps are encouraged to think of ways in which they can be involved to ensure the success of the celebrations in their own towns and in other towns.

7. OLD BUSINESS

- **Budget update** JF reported that she and ML went before the Assembly of Delegates sub-committee today to present the HRC's budget request and make the case for why it should be fully funded. As always, it is helpful to have support at hearings such as this and the presence of Town Representatives Scoba Rhodes and Tom Ryan was appreciated.

- **HRC website update** Michael M reported that he met with students and a teacher at the IT department of Cape Cod Regional Technical High School regarding the HRC's website. The students are enthusiastic about taking on the site's updating and maintenance as a school project and there are tentative plans to have senior students interact with juniors to keep the project ongoing. JF will check with Beth Albert to ensure there is no conflict as the County has its own webmaster. Michael M needs to have brief bios from all Commissioners for inclusion on the website.

- **Print materials/Brochure/Flyer** SH condensed language in the new flyer to free up space to incorporate some info about the HRA, IIWG, the Friends of the BCHRC etc. This is a work in progress. Print materials should be looked at by Ernie Hadley before going to print.

8. OTHER BUSINESS SH will gather some information regarding white people challenging racism and will report at a future meeting.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION IF NECESSARY No executive session.

10. ADJOURN The meeting was adjourned at 8.25pm.

NEXT MEETING: The next HRC meeting will be held at 5.30pm on Monday, May 4, 2009 at the Barnstable County Superior Courthouse, Room 11-12.