



BARNSTABLE COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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MINUTES

Monday, September 17 2018
*Harborview Conference Room, Old Jail
County Complex, Barnstable*

Commissioners:

- * Alan Milsted, Chair
- Kate Epperly, Vice Chair
- * Richard Lavoie
- * Richard Vengroff
- * Patricia Oshman
- Paul Thompson
- * David Schropfer
- * John Hanlon
- * Nell Fields

Commissioner Emerita

Jacqueline Fields

Town Representatives:

- * Theresa Santos, Barnstable
- Michelle Spinney, Bourne
- Vacancy - Brewster
- Vacancy - Chatham
- Vacancy - Dennis
- , Vacancy - Eastham
- Vacancy - Falmouth
- Vacancy - Harwich
- * Gail Wilson, Mashpee
- Vacancy - Orleans
- Pastor Brenda Haywood, Provincetown
- * Alyssa Sidal, Sandwich
- Laurie Veninger - Truro
- Cheryl Frye-Cromwell, Wampanoag Tribe
- Pat Armstrong - Yarmouth

* indicates those present for the meeting

The meeting was **called to order** at 5:33pm

1. Call to Order, welcome, by the Chair;
2. Minutes of the August Meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.
3. Review of Recruitment: Commission Chair A. Milsted provided a brief summary of the process. Five candidates applied and were interviewed. Several of the candidates were enthusiastic and had strong backgrounds. Subsequent to meetings with the County HR Coordinator, the three best candidates withdrew their applications. The County Administrator and Chair of the County Commissioners then put a halt to the process, pending the review of the Ordinances governing BCHRC. The County Administrator was unable to offer any alternative administrative assistance. The BCHRC is thus left without a Coordinator to conduct the administrative business of the HRC.
4. Workshop on the future of the BCHRC:
Commissioner Cakounes organized a Workshop with County Commissioners' to review the BCHRC which took place on August 22, at 10am at the County Commissioner's meeting room. Purpose to discuss a session on the future of the BCHRC. A subsequent meeting was scheduled for the afternoon of

Wednesday September 19. It was pointed out that the membership of the “workshop” did not reflect a neutral approach to the issues. Furthermore, the meeting was scheduled at a time when few BCHRC members, most of whom work, could attend. In addition, the scheduled date of the meeting is the Jewish High Holy Holiday of Yom Kippur. The inappropriateness of this date, which would clearly discriminate against members of the Commission and public based on religion, was discussed. A motion was proposed by Commissioner Vengroff and seconded by Commissioner Schropfer to request a postponement and rescheduling of the workshop. Furthermore it was decided that the Chair should inform Commissioner Cokounes that if the meeting were held as scheduled, no members of the BCHRC would participate. After much discussion and participation by all present, the motion was passed unanimously.

It was also requested by T. Santos that the workshop meeting be videotaped. This suggestion met with unanimous approval. In addition, the Chair was instructed to propose that the postponement be until after the November elections and that the time be in the evening so that members could attend. The Chair drafted a letter reflecting the will of the members.

J. Hanlon suggested demanding a public hearing from the County finance Committee dedicated to a discussion of the potential proposed changes in the status of the BCHRC. Commissioner Fields stated that we need to fully and definitively establish the goals and purpose of the Commission.

5. Some discussion took place regarding the differences between town representatives and the appointed Commissioners. Should the two groups be merged, a hybrid established or the current arrangement be maintained. Town Representative Wilson suggested that a clarification was necessary. A broad ranging but inconclusive discussion followed. The item was referred to the members for consideration at the October 1, meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the BCHRC would be dedicated to a discussion of the proposals for the workshop.

6. Human Rights Breakfast, Monday December 10. Town Representative Santos gave a full report on the current status. Hyannis Golf Club: Scott will cater at the Terrace Room. Funding is to be requested of major sponsors, such as banks, etc. Information should be sent to County website editor. Commissioners and the Chair praising the excellent work done so far made several comments and offered thanks to Santos for the hard work she already completed. An extended discussion followed regarding the placing of an advertisement in the Cape Cod Times and other outlets regarding the event and the awards and soliciting award nominations. Paying for the ads was discussed and it was suggested that the Friends of the BCHRC might contribute. The selection of a keynote speaker was addressed. The past president of the Mass Maritime Academy was suggested as a possibility and briefly discussed.

7. Discussion of the status of the BCHRC as a county government unit as opposed to an independent non-profit followed. Commissioner Schropfer and several others voiced opposition to the non-profit idea.

8. Due to the failure of the county to appoint a Coordinator, the Chair and Commissioner Lavoie stated that they regretted that it would not be possible to hold the Fall Human Rights Academy meeting as scheduled (Wednesday, October 24, United Nations Day. at Cape Cod Academy, Centerville). The Commissioners expressed their deep disappointment. Several alternative suggestions, including decentralizing the event and transferring/ delegating the operation to Cape Cod academy, were considered. Commissioner Oshman suggested that the commissioners could together do the work.

Next meeting: Monday, October 1 2018, 5:30 pm, County Complex (Harborview Room)

Minutes, as amended, approved, 11.5.18: Alan Milsted, Chair.