

Meeting Minutes

HRC

Meeting Minutes-January 21, 2022

Members Present:

Martin Bentz
Chad Freitas
Genesis Galan
Deloris Joseph
Mike Mello

Executive Director:

Marci Pina-Christian

Members Absent:

Jeff Costa
Marcus Chumacks

Meeting Called to Order: Executive Director Marci Pina-Christian, called the meeting to order at 3:07 and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Executive Director's Report:

E. D. Christian reported on emails back and forth on the new curriculum, between Superintendent Treadup, Brian Turner, Martin Bentz, and ED Christian.

Administrators thought the meeting went well and encouraged the HRC to contact them directly with any concerns.

Marci and Martin sent a letter thanking them and will follow what they described as a temporary situation. We again mentioned the Governor's Genocide Bill and the importance of civil rights instruction in the classroom.

We also requested a seat on the Equity Committee for a member of the HRC.

MHRC minutes were sent to the HRC. Martin included a couple of paragraphs on projects NB HRC involved with. HRC minutes have been added to HRC webpage.

Boards and Commissions must upload their minutes, new City policy.

E.D. Christian spoke with Chief Oliviera on having an officer attend monthly HRC meetings and report out. Officer Lizotte is the Downtown Community Police Officer. He was in attendance and will be attending subsequent meetings. He was asked per the ordinance, to let us know of any hate attacks, criminal activity or graffiti. We also mentioned Jibreel Khazan, and wanted to know of any complaints filed related to him, and the need to make sure all officers knew who he was. Officer Lizotte did not know who Mr. Khazan is, but said he would also look into the situation.

Commissioner Joseph mentioned an incident at Voke Tech in which a racial slur was written in the snow by students. Administrators let parents know once a parent found out about it and questioned Administration. Commissioner Joseph mentioned she would like to know how it was handled. Officer Lizotte said he would look into it and report back to the HRC. E.D. Christian mentioned she knows the newly appointed Superintendent of Equity and Diversity for the school as a point of information.

Jeff Costa due for re-appointment, will have to go to City Clerk office to be sworn in.

Motion was made to accept the report by Martin Bentz, seconded, **Motion** carried.

Events:

- PACE Raft applications housing event. Thursday Jan. 27, 9-2PM at Andrea McCoy Recreation Center. Applications prepared at the event.
- UMD MLK Breakfast, 9-11. Virtual Event with keynote speaker, Michael Eric Dyson. Pre-registration is required.

Old Business- Commissioner Galan brought up the Essay Contest and will we have a reading for other participants and will additional funds be given out? E. D. Christian reported 493.00 was raised during the event. We may be able to sponsor a reading at the Library in February, the committee will meet to

determine what it will do. The program was a great success and the submissions were more than we have seen in a while, which was attributed to the meeting with the School Dept. We also welcomed the School Dept's invitation to send info on Human Rights Day, Holocaust, Juneteenth, and other local and national holidays related to civil rights.

Complaints

HRC received info on numerous delays in the opening of an electronics company in the North End by a Cape Verdean owner. Geo Sequeira, Community Relations Specialist for the Department of Community Services spoke briefly on some of the details. They have been trying since 2019 to open. They have now received a temporary occupancy permit. Martin brought up a Muslim owned business, CFC and similar concerns. There seems to be a pattern of delays and frustration by minority owned businesses trying to open businesses in New Bedford. HRC will conduct its own investigation, addressing some of the concerns.

A complaint was received against Whaling City High School by an employee who felt a hostile environment was created and he was targeted, discriminated against, leading to termination allegedly. The E.D. took his complaint and called MCAD while he was present and got an investigator on the phone. She guided us through submitting a complaint online and stated an investigator would follow up on it and call the complainant. As this case was referred to MCAD, the HRC will close the file.

New Business

The HRC has positions which need to be filled for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. E.D. Christian stated it was the request of outgoing Chair Reberio that Commissioner Bentz take on the appointment. A motion was made for appointing Commissioner Bentz as Chair, seconded by Mike Mello. **Motion** carried. Commissioner Bentz has accepted the appointment of Chair of the HRC. Commissioner Joseph asked for a description of responsibilities and the HRC will table nominations for other seats until the February meeting but asked Commissioners to think of how they might want to serve.

HRC Training

E.D. Christian will get back to board on dates on a Saturday 9-12, lunch included, new members will be informed on how to form an effective Commission as well as learn about their role, responsibility, and powers. We will also learn more about each other.

Next meeting February 18th at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Marci

Marcelina Pina-Christian
Executive Director, NBHRC