

Belmont Human Rights Commission
DRAFT Minutes
November 15, 2004

The meeting was called to order by Interim Chair William Rudman. Present: Barry, Bannon, Feins, Shestakofsky, Witten. Absent: Heron, Reynolds, Tourreilles, Yuan

Next scheduled meetings: December 1, 2004 at 7 PM;
December 15, 2004 at 7 PM.

1. Selection of a permanent Chair

Interim Chair asked for confirmations of those members who wanted to stand for this position and those who are definitely not interested in standing to let him know. Nominated Cynthia Bannon as 'acting' Interim Chair for the meeting on Dec 15 as William Rudman will not be attending that meeting. Agenda items for that meeting to be sent directly to Cynthia Bannon.

2. Minutes of November 4 meeting

The minutes of the November 4, 2004 meeting were read and approved as drafted.

3. New Business / Old Business.

Nothing was presented as either old or new business.

4. Survey Update

The survey committee had not been able to do much work in terms of refining the questionnaire since the last meeting. They did raise some questions that needed to be answered in terms of the questionnaire:

- Given that the mailing option through the light bill is limited to one page, do we still want to go this route, or should we be exploring other options? Judie Feins added that the town administrator has a discretionary budget and is this something that we can explore?
- Reducing the questionnaire to one page has serious implications for the amount of data that we will get. How would this impact the diversity process in Belmont?

Judy Feins undertook to do the following:

- Consult with Mel Kleckner about the town budget issue.
- Consult with Paul Solomon and Jennifer about the Visions 21 survey process:
 - What worked, what did they do?
 - What were their stats and response rates?
 - How long was their questionnaire?
 - How did they collect it?
 - Addressing issues of anonymity?
 - Who paid for printing of the questionnaire?

If we use the light bill option, do we need to provide the printed copies, who will fold it into the light bill?

5. Publicity and distribution of the survey.

Discussed multiple options to encourage the return and response rate.

These included using our personal influence in neighborhoods where people know us and we have a relationship with them, using the local newspaper, having it available online, using houses of worship, department stores, library, post office, using the schools, contacting Peter Holland to seek assistance with the distribution via him/schools. etc.

6. What should be in the survey?

Revisited this question given the possibility of reducing the survey dramatically. Agreed that we need to know the following in broad terms: Who are you? (background information). How are we as a community in Belmont doing? (What are your experiences?) And what can we do better? (What would you like to see in Belmont?) Also a question about prefacing the survey with some sort of 'definition' of diversity was discussed. How would we do this and how important is this to do at the beginning of the survey. Perhaps speaking to the charge that the HRC has, would be a way to address this.

7. Next Steps

Survey committee agreed to look at the survey again in the light of some of the above questions when we have an idea as to what can be done? Number of pages confirmed? And light bill or other sources?

If the committee has another draft done before the next meeting, they will circulate it beforehand. Discussions will follow in the next meeting.