

Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission

Meeting in the Public Safety Building
Community Room
350 Washington Street

January 17, 2008

Amended Minutes

Members Attending

Marc Jones, Co-Chair
Dr. Ed Wang, Co-Chair
Karen Fischer
David Heist
Captain John O'Leary
Larry Onie
Enid Shapiro

Members Absent

Sandra Bakalar
Rita McNally
Agnes Rogers
Lena Wong

Associate Members Attending

Dr. Paula Schneider

Associate Members Absent

Honorable Herbert Goodwin
Kay O'Halloran

The Country Club Liaison Attending

Sandy Batchelder

Staff Attending

C. Stephen Bressler, Director

Guests Attending

Virginia Bullock, Housing Project Planner, Planning Department
Jacob Effron
Mark Gray

Co-Chairman Wang opened the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Comments on January 3 Meeting of Domestic Violence Roundtable

Mr. Bressler reported that Lisa Hartwick, Program Director of the Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center was the speaker at the January 3, 2008 meeting of the Brookline Domestic Violence Roundtable, talking about the programs for (primarily) abused women.

Comments on January 11 Meeting of the Massachusetts Association of HRCs

Mr. Bressler said that he and Ms. McNally attended the meeting last week in Medford. He noted that since he started reporting on our strategic planning process other commissions have been similarly engaged, and so congratulated Mr. Batchelder for having an impact beyond our commission.

Reminder January 23rd Meeting on Open Meeting Law and Conflict of interest Law sponsored by Town Counsel's Office at Old Lincoln School
Co-Chairman Jones urged Commission members who have not attended one of these sessions in the past to try to do so on the 23rd.

Membership Changes

Reverend George Chapman attended his last Commission meeting last month. Ms. Fischer, Mrs. Rogers and Mr. Bressler attended the retirement party for Reverend Chapman sponsored by St. Paul's Church. Mr. Bressler wrote a piece for the memory book on behalf of the Commission. The best line at the affair was uttered by Reverend Chapman who urged people to remember that this was a party and not a wake!

Commission members said that they want to recognize Reverend Chapman's many years as a Commission member by giving him a plaque.

Joy Dryfoos has resigned from the Commission. She recently took on responsibilities of editing a newsletter put out by residents at 100 Centre Street. Ms. Bullock said that her father is working on the newsletter with Ms. Dryfoos.

Co-Chairmen Jones and Wang noted that these two additional vacancies were a reminder that Commission members should be looking for new people to serve on the Commission and that we should attempt to have a Commission that represents the diversity of our community.

Immigration Forum

Captain O'Leary said that he and Ms. McNally attended a forum on immigration issues sponsored by the League of Women Voters held at the Runkle School. Speakers debunked myths that illegal immigrants were taking away jobs and housing from U.S. citizens and noted that the types of jobs that most of these undocumented immigrants held were the sorts of positions that no one else wanted to do, and that the jobs were generally low paying. Furthermore, 95% of these individuals were law-abiding. They

are in this country because of the deplorable conditions in their own countries. Many illegal immigrants have been in the United States for 20 – 30 years or more. Their status as illegals is generally because of complex immigration laws.

Co-Chairman Wang thanked Captain O’Leary for reporting on the immigration forum. He noted that many Commission members attend numerous programs that not all of us have the time to go to, so their reporting back to us is very helpful.

Fair Housing Programming

Housing Project Planner Virginia Bullock said that as part of the requirements for the Town to receive over a million dollars in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) money Brookline has to prepare an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. This has to be done every five years and was last put together in 2002. The report to be submitted to HUD has three components: an analysis to identify obstacles to Fair Housing, a description of the actions the Town has undertaken to overcome those obstacles, and the results of the actions that were taken by the Town.

Protected classes under federal and state law include: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, military status, source of income, ancestry, and genetics.

The Town is expected to increase housing choice, identify problems and build community support for Fair Housing.

The analysis contains Brookline’s demographic and housing data via the census and other sources as well as a review of Fair Housing complaints gathered by agencies such as the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston (FHC) and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). Also examined are public sector elements that affect housing choices, such as zoning, Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) tenant selection procedures, availability of subsidized housing, tax policies, and private sector elements that affect housing choice such as mortgage lending practices and private rental and sales practices.

Fair Housing is not limited to affordable housing. Practices that relate to all market level housing is included.

The new analysis will incorporate data gleaned from the two studies conducted by the FHC and the Disability Law Center (DLC) for the City of Newton as well as material contained in the Harvard University Civil Rights Project Study to reflect regional trends and findings with regard to housing discrimination.

Ms. Bullock indicated that she and Mr. Bressler had been working together on Fair Housing issues over the past year including attending Fair Housing Trainings in Newton provided by the FHC and the DLC and co-sponsored a Fair Housing Training in Brookline last spring. She urged the Commission, which has Fair Housing implementation responsibilities under Brookline's Fair Housing By-law, to continue doing programming, alone and jointly with the Planning Department.

Discussion followed. While it was understood that Brookline abutting Newton shares many of the demographics as the Garden City, Mr. Batchelder suggested that we should not accept as a given that the findings of substantial discrimination that occurs there also occurs in Brookline. Ms. Bullock reported that the FHC had suggested that Brookline not conduct its own studies, because it was strongly believed that because of the demographics and the fact that real estate agencies frequently served both communities, that replicating the studies would not be the best use of monies. Mr. Bressler noted that the two studies in Newton cost \$25,000 each and suggested that in these difficult financial times the Town might be reluctant to spend \$50,000 on studies. Ms. Bullock said that if the Commission decided to pursue having the Town do studies then we may want to apply for CDBG money for this purpose.

Ms. Bullock said that she wants to come back in March and review her draft of the Analysis with the Commission prior to submitting it to the Board of Selectmen in May.

Ms. Bullock noted that there will be a Fair Housing Training for large property owners on February 27th. Another Fair Housing Training for realtors will take place on April 30th.

Ms. Bullock and Mr. Bressler will be co-authoring an op ed piece on Fair Housing for the TAB in the near future. They also had discussed doing a CATV program on Fair Housing and possibly a forum akin to the one the Commission did last April on diversity in Brookline.

Dr. Schneider asked whether there is any anecdotal evidence of housing discrimination in the town. Mr. Bressler said that he has not heard of any racially-based discrimination directly, recently, or anecdotally from either the Fair Housing Center of the MCAD. He talked about a flurry of complaints that related to families with young children with regard to properties that had lead paint and how the Attorney General's Office had focused on that a few years ago, but that most of these complaints were referred to the Health Department.

Co-Chairman Jones commented that the disparate treatment of members of protected classes by real estate brokers/agents was such that people might not even be aware that they were being discriminated against.

**Mr. Batchelder said that he had read the Newton report and was surprised at how blatant the discrimination was.
Dr. Schneider wondered whether the cost of doing studies could be brought down if university students could be persuaded to participate.**

Co-Chairman Jones said that Mr. Batchelder's comments had resonated with him. We have to let people know about housing discrimination practices and come up with a mechanism to let us know what is happening in the town.

Co-Chairman Wang asked for volunteers to work with Mr. Bressler. Ms. Fischer and Mr. Batchelder volunteered.

Approval of November and December 2007 Minutes

ON THE MOTION of Ms. Fischer, seconded by Dr. Schneider, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the November and December 2007 meetings as written.

Comments by David Heist

The Commission welcomed Mr. Heist (appearing in his uniform) back from his basic training stint in the U.S. Navy Reserves. Mr. Heist said that he wanted to talk about life in Gulf Port, Mississippi and how it compared to life in Brookline. He noted that whereas here there is racial integration in housing in Gulf Port African-Americans tended to live in a different part of town. Black people also tended to go to different churches. He said that the experience of living in Gulf Port really opened his eyes to life in another part of the country and made him feel grateful that he is living in Brookline, which is a diverse community where one may experience a variety of cultures. He also noted that where the races tended to be apart in civilian

life the military is a melting pot. His bunk mate was from the Philippines. Mr. Heist said that there is zero tolerance for racism in the military.

Inter-Group Relations

Co-Chairman Wang said that he is concerned about what has been going on in the town with regard to the incident involving Arthur Conquest this past May and the controversy over the police report. He said that the Commission's charge under the by-law is to reduce polarization and enhance community understanding and dialog. Therefore, he wanted to have some discussion on what the Commission may need to do to improve inter-group relations in the town. Copies of the Town By-Law establishing the Commission, the Executive Summary from the Police Report (dated October 11th), and the text of Mr. Conquest's presentation to the Board of Selectmen as taken from www.onbrookline.com were passed out (and are appended to these minutes).

Mr. Heist and others asked for clarification with regard to the incident and the continuing controversy. Mr. Bressler was asked to explain what had happened.

Mr. Bressler said that this past May there was a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) hearing on a controversial construction project in the town. Following the hearing a member of the public, a Town Meeting Member (TMM) named Ruthann Sneider, apparently initiated a discussion with ZBA member Larry Kaplan, with regard to the vote on the project taken by the ZBA. The discussion apparently became heated and at that point Arthur Conquest, also a TMM, came upon the two and chastised Mr. Kaplan for the tone of voice he was using with Ms. Sneider. It appears that Mr. Kaplan felt intimidated by Mr. Conquest to the point where he requested that someone call the police. Town Counsel Jennifer Dopazo and Planning Department Chief Planner Polly Selkoe called the police.

Over the police radio the police department dispatcher directed officers to Town Hall to respond to an unspecified disturbance on the 6th Floor. When the police arrived at Town Hall they did not know what they would find. As the police entered the Town Hall lobby they encountered Mr. Conquest and Ms. Sneider and others who were getting off of the elevator. Mr. Conquest, who was aware that the police had been summoned, told the police that he had been involved in the matter on the 6th floor. The police detained and questioned Mr. Conquest in the lobby while other officers went to the 6th floor to find out what had transpired.

In the lobby while the police were questioning Mr. Conquest others of his friends were making light of the whole matter. From what is contained in the full police report, including depositions, at no time did the police have any physical contact with Mr. Conquest. However, because of the noise and chaos in the Town Hall lobby the police officer speaking with Mr. Conquest did raise his voice.

The police discussed among themselves how to proceed with Mr. Conquest and later informed him of their decisions. In the days following the incident, during a review by more senior police, it was determined that no laws had been broken and that no action should be taken against Mr. Conquest.

Subsequently, Mr. Conquest felt aggrieved and was urged by various selectmen and the town administrator to follow procedure and file a complaint with the police department, which he did. Following procedure the matter was investigated by the internal affairs department and a report was issued, though this process apparently took longer than had been anticipated. Chief O'Leary presented the report to the Board of Selectmen on December 11, 2007.

Mr. Conquest was dissatisfied with the conclusions stated in the police report and requested that the Board of Selectmen should hold a hearing on the matter, which they refused to do. Numerous town meeting members agreed with Mr. Conquest that a follow up was necessary to resolve any questions regarding police procedure with respect to the incident, and a flurry of e-mails on the matter began to be circulated.

On January 8, 2008, Mr. Conquest was given an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board of Selectmen with regard to the incident and the police report at the beginning of the meeting during the public comments session. His comments included allegations that there were two systems of justice operating in the town, one for Blacks and Hispanics and one for everyone else. At that hearing Board Chair Nancy Daley did not allow additional comment, but agreed to allow further comment during future public comment sessions.

On January 15th town meeting member Jonathan Davis and resident Susan Allen were given an opportunity to speak on the matter also during the public comment session.

Mr. Bressler said that was it in a nutshell and noted that Mr. Onie and Ms. McNally had been present at the several Selectmen's meetings also.

Mr. Onie said that he believed that the Commission should try to bring the people involved in the incident together to discuss what happened, since he believed that there were important sociological and psychological elements that needed to be acknowledged in addition to the political, including the element of fear and different styles of speaking among races and how those may be interpreted. He noted that what has been happening in the town is quite sad, tragic really, and expressed concern about scapegoating. Citing his experience facilitating dialogs among high school students on issues of diversity, he believed that there should be some dialog under the auspices of the Commission.

Ms. Shapiro observed that the TAB has been contributing to the escalation of the situation.

Co-Chairman Jones said that action by the Commission to mediate raised questions since we are an arm of town government. Also, might our involvement exacerbate the problem?

Mr. Bressler asked who Mr. Onie wanted to bring together. Mr. Onie said Jennifer Dopazo, Arthur Conquest, the police officer involved and the ZBA member. Mr. Bressler asked Mr. Onie what should our expectations be for the results of such a meeting? Mr. Onie said that we should all learn from what is discussed at the meeting. Mr. Bressler said that were such a meeting to be held he would want a guarantee that the matter would end there.

Mr. Batchelder wondered whether there may be a conflict of interest in our involvement?

Co-Chairman Jones said that there is a larger issue than the impact of all this on Mr. Conquest, and that is the perception of the community.

Ms. Shapiro wondered how you deal with a situation that is out of control. Dr. Schneider compared approaching this to couples therapy. Ms. Shapiro suggested that were a mediation attempt made then it could be under our auspices but with outside facilitators. Mr. Bressler suggested bringing in Brookline Mental Health.

Co-Chairman Wang said that Mr. Onie made the right diagnostic concerning the current situation and the nature of the tension, actions and reactions of all involved, he went on to ask what should we do that will not inflame the situation but improve inter-group communications and relations?

Co-Chairman Jones asked which scenario do we focus on: putting the people involved in the incident in the same room, or the impact that this has had on the whole community? He read from the By-Law Section 3.14.3(b) that we have a continuing role, that our duties include increasing “communications across racial lines to destroy stereotypes, to halt polarization, end distrust and hostility, and create common ground for efforts toward public order and social justice;...” He went on to say that it is important for Brookline to not only be a welcoming community but to be perceived as being a welcoming community.

Commission members said that this issue needs to be further discussed and sooner than our next regularly scheduled meeting on February 13th. Therefore, we will try to schedule a meeting sooner.

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission

Meeting in the Public Safety Building
Community Room
350 Washington Street

March 19, 2008

Minutes

Members Attending

Dr. Ed Wang, Co-Chair
Sandra Bakalar
Rita McNally
Captain John O'Leary
Larry Onie
Agnes Rogers
Enid Shapiro
Lena Wong

Members Absent

Marc Jones, Co-Chair
Karen Fischer
David Heist

Associate Members Attending

Kay O'Halloran
Dr. Paula Schneider

Associate Members Absent

Honorable Herbert Goodwin

The Country Club Liaison Attending

Sandy Batchelder

Staff Attending

C. Stephen Bressler, Director

Members of the Public Attending

Reverend George Chapman
Arthur W. Conquest III
Jacob Effron
Mark Gray
Superintendent of Schools William Lupini
Officer Justin O'Kane
Chief Daniel O'Leary
Sgt. Michael Raskin

Co-Chairman Wang opened the meeting at 7:12 p.m. He noted that Co-Chairman Jones has a stomach virus and had sent his regrets at not being able to attend. Also, Ms. Fischer had a work-related scheduling conflict.

Approval of February 4, 2008 Minutes

ON THE MOTION of Ms. Bakalar, seconded by Captain O'Leary, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes as written.

Meet with Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Lupini

Dr. Lupini discussed the incident at the Driscoll School involving a popular white teacher who placed tape over the mouth of a black, 7th grade female, METCO student. He noted that the young teacher had been in his first year at Driscoll and has now left the Brookline Public Schools.

Subsequently there was a meeting with parents of students in that class, some of whom who believed that it was correct that the teacher was no longer there and some of whom who believed that the teacher should not have left.

Several parents have written letters to the Tab expressing their thoughts on the matter.

In the aftermath, the Wellesley College Center for Women's Studies has been brought in to assist in a consultant role.

Within the context of the incident Dr. Lupini commented on the Brookline Public Schools being part of the Minority Student Achievement Network consisting of schools in several states and how a situation such as this complicates these types of programs.

Mr. Batchelder noted the importance of focusing on the facts of the incident and the welfare of the female student.

Dr. Lupini said that regardless of the motivation of the teacher in this matter what he did was not acceptable under any condition.

Mr. Onie commented that he heard that there seemed to be an ethnic component to the way that some parents reacted to the teacher's leaving, with Russian parents being the most concerned. Mr. Conquest asked whether race had ever become a factor. Dr. Lupini noted that Driscoll did have more Russian students than other schools in town and that race did not become a factor until the session with parents. Mr. Conquest asked whether Dr. Lupini thought that the teacher's motivation would have been

different had the student been white? Dr. Lupini said that he did not believe so.

Dr. Schneider commented that when she was a child she remembered another child in school who would not stop moving her foot under her chair. The teacher brought rope to school and tied the girl's foot to try to get her to stop! Dr. Lupini commented on a teacher who used to rap students' knuckles with a ruler. The rules have changed and this type of behavior by teachers is not acceptable any longer.

Dr. Lupini said the facts are that METCO did not play a role in the teacher leaving the Brookline Public Schools. Also, some parents wanted to have the teacher return to the class and some did not. He went on to discuss teacher mentoring programs and lamented that not every possible scenario can be included. He also talked about faculty tenure and noted that the average teacher these days stays in a system for between five to seven years and that the having principals and teachers in a school for a long period of time no longer happens.

Mr. Onie wondered whether there had been any surprises as a result of the parental piece? Dr. Lupini said that he was surprised at how close to script this played out with regard to similar incidents in other communities.

Dr. Lupini agreed with Mrs. Rogers in that it is categorically wrong to touch a child or to place tape over a child's mouth.

In response to a question from Chairman Wang Dr. Lupini talked about continuing work with principals and some high school staff assisting with middle schoolers and elementary students and parents. High school social worker Hope Schroy is also working with parents.

Responding to a question from Ms. Bakalar Dr. Lupini answered that some parents are upset that the teacher is gone. Dr. Lupini also commented on erroneous assumptions and generalizations that are made about METCO students and their families by some Brookline school parents.

Ms. Shapiro thanked Dr. Lupini for having this open discussion with the Commission.

Meet with Chief of Police Daniel O'Leary on 2007 Police Statistics

Chief O'Leary made a comprehensive presentation on 2007 police statistics utilizing a power point display (attached).

Elaborating on the power point presentation Chief O'Leary commented on some crimes at various locations around the town, including Walgreen's, High Street, Horai-San, Putterham Circle, St. Paul Street, Beacon Street, Harvard Street, and the crime scene investigations and cooperation with other police departments that resulted in the eventual capture of perpetrators.

Ms. Bakalar said that her daughter had been in a bank at Putterham Circle during a robbery there and how traumatic that experience had been.

Dr. Schneider asked Chief O'Leary to comment on crimes committed during the daytime and at night. He said that more crimes are committed at night, and that some establishments are targeted at their closing times.

Dr. Schneider suggested that the police department issue literature on what to do and what not to do to prevent yourself from becoming a victim. Chief O'Leary said that Brookline really is a safe place. Captain O'Leary added that the police department does give information to residents, especially in the elderly complexes, as well as to other neighborhood groups, on what is going on in their areas of town. He also noted that Brookline has a daily blog <http://blog.brooklinepolice.com/>

Chief O'Leary talked about cooperation with other police departments, the state of crime scene investigation in Brookline with regard to fingerprinting and DNA analysis, and explained the differences of various types of crime (eg., burglary and larceny). He noted that motor vehicle thefts are down but that the thefts of GPS gadgets continue.

Details of statistics with regard to race and gender stops are in the accompanying power point material, however Chief O'Leary commented that he has been instructing officers to knock down the number of *unreported numbers*.

Chief O'Leary was pleased that the Brookline Police Department was one of three departments to be recognized with a civil rights award by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Chief O'Leary commented on a Northeastern University daytime traffic study (approximately 10,000 vehicles) with regard to race during the period August – December 2007 at three major locations in the town, the data from which coincided with statistics collected over a period of ten years by the Police Department. Responding to a question from Co-Chairman Wang,

Chief O'Leary noted that the study is conducted during daytime hours because it is too difficult making racial/ethnic identifications of persons in moving vehicles at night.

Ms. McNally commented that in their Crime Watch section the Tab frequently identified people of color only. It was noted that crime log material is public record and that it is picked up by the Tab every Monday. Mr. Bressler said that over the years he has communicated with all of the weekly newspapers that have published in the town about not including racial or ethnic data unless there was a specific need to do so, since it would give the impression that all crime was carried out by members of these groups.

Ms. Bakalar decried the use of cell-phones by drivers. Chief O'Leary said that there should be a state-wide ban on such use. Ms. O'Halloran commented on having witnessed a driver in a Comcast van who was on a cell-phone who almost struck a pedestrian.

Chief O'Leary also noted that snatches of I-Pods are up.

With regard to hiring, Chief O'Leary reviewed recent efforts and some of the issues the department is dealing with including civil service guidelines and restrictions, passing various psychological and physical tests including drug tests, background tests, passing the police academy. He noted that candidates entering the academy in May will not be on the street until after Thanksgiving.

Ms. Wong commented that car thefts would be higher if it were not for the ban on overnight street parking.

Co-Chairman Wang thanked Chief O'Leary for his comments.

Further Discussion on Inter-Group Relations
Postponed to a future meeting

Budget

Mr. Bressler commented that the budget review with the Advisory Committee on March 13 went well and that we would have our budget review with the Board of Selectmen on March 25. He thanked Co-Chairman Wang for attending the March 13 meeting, which was also attended by Fran

Berger, chair of the Broadband Monitoring Committee, which Mr. Bressler also staffs.

Noting our objectives and accomplishments Ms. Bakalar said that we have been very ambitious in our goals and suggested that given the small size of the staff that we need to restructure. Mr. Bressler commented that over the years many of our programs have been driven by the interests and volunteer efforts of Commission members, but that as members get busy with other things, or when interests change, that less time may be available for certain programs. Ms. Bakalar said that we need to diversify representation on the Commission. Mr. Bressler said that the Board of Selectmen are well aware of our concern that the Commission should be more reflective of the diversity of the town and urged members to be proactive with regard to recruiting.

Ms. Shapiro wondered how we should restructure. Dr. Schneider talked about increasing the number of subcommittees. Mr. Batchelder noted that we have already gone through this process in our strategic planning and that we already have a subcommittee structure. He offered to provide more assistance to the co-chairs and director.

Co-Chairman Wang and Ms. Shapiro suggested dedicating a meeting to this purpose.

Mr. Bressler commented that the Commission does a lot and is involved in many areas of life in the town, moreso than many human relations commissions in other communities. He noted that the extent of discussion we have on sensitive and delicate matters with our chief of police and superintendent of schools does not happen in all cities and towns.

Ms. McNally said that she wished that the Commission could be more active in the schools. Ms. Shapiro suggested that we contact or meet with the PTOs to find out what their issues are.

Mr. Bressler commented that he has been contacted by the Newton Human Rights Commission about having a joint meeting with them on the topic of fair housing.

New Business

Mr. Conquest wanted to know why material relating to his being stopped by the police early one morning in 1993 with regard to a rape that had occurred in the town had been given to the Commission. Mr. Bressler

explained again that police/community relations is one of our concerns and that since he has been giving the Commission all material that has been made public by the Board of Selectmen and the Police with regard to the May 24, 2007, incident involving Mr. Conquest, and since this included material on the 1993 matter, it was also given to the members of the Commission.

Hidden Brookline

Reverend Chapman appeared on behalf of the Hidden Brookline Committee.

He noted that during the period that there was slavery in Massachusetts there were also slaves in Brookline and that, in fact, there are nine African-American slaves in unmarked graves within the walls of the Old Burying Ground. There were slave owners in Brookline as well as persons in the mercantile trade who benefited by slavery in our country.

Reverend Chapman noted that a Mr. Sewall's slaves cleaned the town hall, and that another slave named Adam was a Minuteman.

Reverend Chapman explained that the Hidden Brookline Committee wants to have a plaque erected at the Old Burying Ground that will recognize the presence there of the African-Americans in that cemetery.

Reverend Chapman said that the goal is to have a plaque that is 14 inches by 20 inches. He read a draft text.

Reverend Chapman offered the following motion that was accepted at the March 12, 2008, meeting of the Hidden Brookline Committee:

The Committee recommends to the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission that they

A – Authorize a bronze plaque to be placed at the Old Town Cemetery noting that within the cemetery are buried the remains of slaves who lived in Brookline, including Adam, a Minuteman, and giving the names of the enslaved persons where known. (Suggested text, and vendor, as voted by the Committee)

B – Request the Brookline Cemetery Trustees authorize the placement of the memorial plaque at the Old Town Cemetery in a public location.

C – Authorize the Hidden Brookline Committee of the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission to seek funds to partially offset the cost of the creation and placement of the plaque by means of a grant proposal to the Brookline Community Foundation Legacy Fund.

D – Authorize the expenditure of money from the Diverse the Curse™ funds to cover the costs beyond what is received from outside sources.

THE MOTION WAS moved by Mrs. Rogers and seconded by Ms. Wong and approved unanimously by the Commission.

Reverend Chapman explained that he will be meeting with the Cemetery Trustees next week and will also be in touch with the Erin Gallantine, director of open spaces for the town. He noted that at this time it is not known whether the plaque would be mounted on a wall or post. He said that once we know we are going to do this we hope to have an appropriate event where the presentation of the plaque is made. The burying ground is on Walnut Street.

Report on February 27 Fair Housing Training for Landlords and Property Managers

Mr. Bressler reported that the Commission was a co-sponsor along with the Planning Department and the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston of a fair housing training for landlords and property owners on February 27 at the Public Safety Building. The actual training was conducted by staff from the Fair Housing Center.

Mr. Bressler noted that another training for real estate brokers will take place on April 28.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission

Meeting in the Public Safety Building
Community Room
350 Washington Street

April 16, 2008

Minutes

Members Attending

Dr. Ed Wang, Co-Chair
Karen Fischer
David Heist
Rita McNally
Kay O'Halloran
Captain John O'Leary
Enid Shapiro
Lena Wong

Members Absent

Marc Jones, Co-Chair
Sandra Bakalar
Larry Onie
Agnes Rogers

Associate Members Attending

Dr. Paula Schneider

Associate Members Absent

Honorable Herbert Goodwin

The Country Club Liaison Attending

Sandy Batchelder

Staff Attending

C. Stephen Bressler, Director

Members of the Public Attending

Mark Gray

Co-Chairman Wang opened the meeting at 7:07 p.m. He noted that Co-Chairman Jones and Ms. Bakalar and Mr. Onie gave prior notice that they would not be able to attend this evening.

Correspondence Exchange With Editor of *Tab*

Mr. Bressler distributed copies of an e-mail correspondence exchange with Brookline *Tab* editor Erin Clossey. The text of that correspondence follows:

Friday, March 21, 2008, from Erin Clossey to Stephen Bressler

"Hi, Steve,

"I hope this e-mail finds you well.

(Correspondence Exchange With Editor of *Tab* – continued)

“I’m writing because Jessica heard from a couple of places that you expressed some concern with the TAB’s crime reporting at a recent HR-YRC meeting with Chief O’Leary. Specifically, that you believe we pay undue attention to crimes alleged to be committed by minorities.

“Neither of us were at the meeting ourselves, so I apologize if this turns out to be a “telephone game” situation. But in case it’s not, I wanted to bring this up with you because I think it’s something that needs to be addressed and put to rest.

“We report all the arrests in a given week, without exception, in our Crime Watch log. In every case, we publish the name, age, and address of every suspect age 17 or older. In cases of juveniles, we publish age, sex and city or town of residence only. The amount of detail we go into with a given arrest depends on the severity of the crime of which the suspect is accused, the level of relevance to readers in a given neighborhood, or (and here’s where we most commonly hear objections) the uniqueness or bizarreness of a particular act. Similarly, we decide to break out into full-fledged stories only those incidents that pose a serious public safety hazard (i.e. sexual assaults, armed robberies, etc.) or that are indicative of a wider pattern (such as our last story on GPS thefts).

“We do not base our decisions on the race, ethnicity or address of any suspect. We have a policy to never report on the race or ethnicity of a suspect that has been arrested, and only include race as a descriptor in the case of a suspect that is at large (and only then if there are other identifying characteristics in the description, such as height or build).

“Jessica also heard that you told the group you’ve had frequent discussions with the TAB to voice your disapproval of our crime reporting. While that may have been the case with my predecessors, I regret that you and I haven’t had a chance to chat face to face, and would welcome that opportunity.

“I hope this sheds some light on how we report things here, but please do not hesitate to call me if you still have any questions or concerns. We strive to remain unbiased in all our news reporting, and were frankly, shocked, to hear that our motives may have been called into question.

Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission
April 16, 2008
Page Three

(Correspondence Exchange With Editor of *Tab* – continued)

“Best,

“Erin”

Friday, March 21, 2008, from Stephen Bressler to Erin Clossey

“Hi Erin,

“I hope this e-mail finds you well also.

“At last Wednesday’s Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission meeting someone expressed curiosity as to how it was decided which crimes and which names were included in the police blotter section of the TAB, and wondered as to the numbers of persons with either ethnic names, and/or addresses that would suggest that they resided in parts of Boston, in particular, that were known to have concentrations of minority groups.

“I said that the way that members of minority groups are presented in the press, especially if there is a concentration of them presented week after week in the police blotter section of the newspaper, may convey the impression that only (or at least primarily) it is members of those groups who are committing the crime in the town, and that this could instill fear of members of those groups in some people. (Unsaid at the meeting was the knowledge, over years, that because of this fear some people may call the police in reaction to the presence of a member of one of these minority groups, just walking down the street, even if no crime has been committed, but in stereotypical anticipation that a crime may be committed.)

“I also noted that I have been with the Commission since 1973 and, over several decades, have discussed these concerns with all of the weekly newspapers that have served Brookline (Citizen, Chronicle, Standard, TAB) at one time or another, though in fairness to you I agree that you and I have not had that discussion (because the matter has not come up since you took over as editor).

“Furthermore, I have encouraged editors to use photographs of members of minority groups (young people and adults) who excel in business, academia, etc., to better balance and represent members of those groups who otherwise might achieve recognition only when their members appear in crime stories.

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(Correspondence Exchange With Editor of *Tab* – continued)

“In any event, with regard to the TAB or any of the other weekly papers that have served Brookline, I never suggested that there was a deliberate decision to paint certain groups in a negative manner. I will certainly clarify that to the members of the Commission and to the members of the public who were in attendance last Wednesday.

“I do not know how the individuals who spoke with Jessica presented their take on my comments to her, but I hope you will relate my response to her also.

“Regards,

“Steve”

Friday, March 21, 2008, from Erin Clossey to Stephen Bressler

“Hi, Steve,

“Thanks for your quick and thoughtful response. I will certainly pass this along to Jessica.

“And please don't hesitate to give me a call with any concerns, questions or ideas for coverage you have.

“Have a great weekend,
“Erin”

Commission members agreed that Mr. Bressler's e-mail clarified the discussion held at our March 19 meeting.

Further discussion focused on the usefulness of identifying information in the *Tab* police report when a suspect has not been apprehended or when the police want to inform the public that certain crimes are being committed in certain areas of the town and want to give out a description of a perpetrator. However, in situations where an arrest has been made such identifying information was not seen as playing a particularly useful purpose.

Ms. Wong noted that we cannot censor the *Tab*, nor would we want to.

(Correspondence Exchange With Editor of *Tab* – continued)

Captain O’Leary explained how the information in the police log is public record and how that information is shared with the *Tab* and how the newspaper is cooperative when it comes to reporting on situations of a sensitive nature. Ms. Shapiro complimented the *Tab* and the police. Captain O’Leary then spoke about the police blog, the purpose of which is to educate the public. He said that the blog does not give out names or addresses.

Mr. Bressler concluded that his issue is that people reading the newspaper not feel that they have to be concerned when they see a person of color, out of a misplaced fear that the person is going to commit some crime.

Approval of March 2008 Minutes

ON THE MOTION of Ms. Shapiro, seconded by Ms. O’Halloran, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the March 2008 meeting as written.

Membership Change

Mr. Bressler noted that Kay O’Halloran’s status on the Commission has been upgraded from Associate Member to Full Member following her interview with the Board of Selectmen.

The Selectmen have not made all of the appointments at this time.

Budget Update – Review Before the Board of Selectmen

Mr. Bressler commented that the budget review took place on March 25 and had been successful. He said that the Selectmen had expressed interest in the Commission’s activities.

Hidden Brookline

Mr. Bressler noted that the Hidden Brookline Committee has been very active. He distributed the minutes of the April 14 meeting of the Hidden Brookline Committee, as follows:

“Attending: Dr. Barbara Brown, Chair, Reverend George Chapman, Mark Gray, Dr. Emilie Steele, Stephen Bressler, Director

“Barbara opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

“Steve said that Karen Fischer and Rita McNally had indicated that they would not be able to make this evening’s meeting.

(Hidden Brookline – continued)

“Mark introduced new member Emilie Dawes Steele.

“DAR Battle of Lexington Plaque

Steve has been trying to find out the location of the plaque. He has not gotten any response from the Building Department. He will try again and will also contact Greer Hardwicke at Historical Preservation.

“Walking Tour

“Barbara said that the next walking tour for 4th graders is scheduled for May 1 with a rain date of April 30. She would like to get a photograph of the Battle of Lexington Plaque to use on the tour. If we are unable to do so she

will e-mail a photo she has and Steve will try to get the IT department to enlarge it to poster size.

“Barbara will check with Jay Sugarman to make sure it's OK with his students if a member of the *Tab* staff comes on the tour and writes a story and takes pictures.

“Barbara is continuing to meet with Geoff Tegnell, Brookline Public Schools social studies coordinator for K-6. She said that Geoff continues to be interested in introducing this material into the town curriculum system-wide. Barbara will follow up with him.

“Patriots Day

Barbara said that Jean Stringham of the Brookline Historical Society has agreed to our participating in the Patriots Day event on Monday morning at 10 o'clock, April 21 at the Devotion School. Emilie said that she is a descendant of William Dawes, who, with Paul Revere, rode to towns outside of Boston alerting people that the British were coming. It is “William Dawes” who will be riding into Brookline on April 21.

“Barbara will contact Jean and alert her to the fact that Dawes is an ancestor of Emilie's, and that she will be participating in the event on behalf of the Hidden Brookline Committee. Steve said that Emilie's relationship to Dawes is newsworthy and that either Jean or we should contact the *Tab* and let them know.

“Web Site

Barbara has done more work on the Web site.

(Hidden Brookline – continued)

“Hidden Brookline TV Show

Steve suggested that as we release information to the town about the relationship of some of our residents to slavery (pro and con) we should do a series of TV shows where we would discuss in a thoughtful manner, and within the context of Brookline and Massachusetts and American society in those times, what took place in our community.

“Committee members believed that the shows should be about 30 minutes.

“Each stand-alone show would have a brief preface explaining how the Hidden Brookline Committee came into being and what our goals are.

“The expectation is that our first program would be about Edward Devotion. We will want to do a brief tour, inside and out, of the Devotion House, and get a picture of Devotion’s will, which is in the Brookline Room at the Library.

“The Devotion program would be a studio shoot with Barbara, Emilie, George, Mark and Steve as participants. Other programs may have different guests.

“George suggested that our next meeting should focus on the Devotion program. When we decide when we are ready to do the program Steve will make the arrangements with Brookline Access Television.

“Barbara suggested that the *Tab* do a story in advance of the showing of each program. Steve and George said that we could do the program and then let the *Tab* see it in advance so that they could do a review to publicize the show.

“Finally, committee members discussed their attitudes towards Devotion's gift to the town, including his slave-owning, and felt it's important for such a discussion to be town-wide.

“Old Burying Ground

George displayed a true-to-scale draft of the plaque commemorating the slaves whose remains are in the Old Burying Ground. The draft had been prepared by the vendor. Steve noted that George had appeared before the Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission on March 19, and that the Commission endorsed the idea of the plaque, as well as approving funding

(Hidden Brookline – continued)

the plaque in part through the Commission's *Diverse the Curse* program. George said that additional funding support might come through the Brookline Community Foundation. George also reported that he had appeared before Cemetery Trustees and that there had been discussion on the idea of having the plaque as well as on its wording.

“Discussion followed wherein it was suggested that some changes may be necessary in the wording on the plaque.

“It was noted that there is one member of the Cemetery Trustees in particular who is quite knowledgeable about the Old Burying Ground and that we should take his comments into consideration as we move forward.

“Next Meeting:

7:00 p.m., Monday, May 5, 2008, Health Department Library.

“The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.”

Rescheduling of Youth Awards

Mr. Bressler said that on March 12 he sent the following to the Commission co-chairs:

“I want to recommend that we do not do the Youth Awards this year.

“Our practice has been to have a reception either at the Health Building or the Public Safety Building and then present the awards at the Selectmen's meeting. The purpose of the reception actually was to gather all recipients and their families and guests in a spot close to Town Hall and then go over together. The proximity of the Health Building and Public Safety Building to the Town Hall allowed us to do this with ease.

“Because of the Town Hall renovation the Selectmen are meeting at the Old Lincoln School, so having a reception at the Health Building or at the Public Safety Building will not work. There is no space at the Old Lincoln School that we could close off for a reception.

“Also, parking in the vicinity of the Old Lincoln School for what could be a considerable crowd is a problem.

“Furthermore, Town Meeting this year starts on May 27. If it goes into the next week it will meet on the first Tuesday, June 3.

(Rescheduling of Youth Awards – continued)

“I am out of the office the following Monday and Tuesday June 9 and 10.

“That means that the earliest we could have the Youth Awards would be June 17. School ends on June 19 except for seniors who will have had their senior prom on May 27 and who will have already graduated by this time. In our experience with the Youth Awards the later we do this the fewer kids actually show up.

“Lastly, I would like to devote more time to communicating with school people involved in community service so as to generate more nominees for the awards. We have had fewer and fewer kids nominated over the last few years, which I see as a problem. I would also like to consider changing the cycle for the awards, perhaps having this program earlier in the year so as not to conflict with end of school distractions such as field trips and other awards programs.”

Mr. Bressler said that he will speak further with Youth Awards Committee chair Marc Jones about re-scheduling, but that having the program in June this year is not an option.

Fair Housing

Ms. McNally noted that Planning Department Housing Planner Virginia Bullock is compiling a HUD-required document on “impediments to fair housing.” Ms. Bullock has presented a draft to the town’s Housing Advisory Board. Ms. Bullock appeared before the Commission at our January 2008 meeting.

2008 Child Care Resource Guide Now On-Line

The Commission has been publishing a guide to child care programs since the early 1970s. The 2008 guide, assembled by the Commission with the participation of the Brookline Health Department Child Care Licensing Team and the Brookline Early Childhood Advisory Council, is now available on-line at <http://www.townofbrooklinemass.com/Bcpc/>

Further Discussion on Strategic Planning

Co-Chairman Wang said that as a follow-up to last month’s Commission meeting there were four areas that needed further discussion: Membership Recruitment, Commission Member Interest in Projects, Program Priorities

(Further Discussion on Strategic Planning – continued)
in Consideration of Commission Member & Staff Resources, and Where to Hold Meetings Around Town.

Commission members agreed that it would be beneficial for the Commission to hold meetings in different parts of town and meet with different groups and individuals to learn which of their concerns coincide with our mission and priorities as defined in the by-laws and our strategic plan.

Mr. Batchelder noted that the plan was last printed in 2006 and now should be re-examined. He observed that Hidden Brookline has become a significant program while we are going to re-think the scope of the youth awards.

He also suggested looking at the skills and expertise of Commission members with an eye to determining how to best use these talents and how to recruit others to provide skills and expertise we deem to be needed. To that end he suggested first having Commission members do a self-assessment by completing a questionnaire, which he offered to draft. He also suggested that we prepare a role description for Commission members to let everyone know what is expected of them.

Mr. Batchelder also said that we should take another look at our organizational structure to determine what sub-committees are necessary and what may be delegated to these committees and what needs to be discussed before the full Commission. Also, we should be aware that we may be able to recruit people to work on specific sub-committee projects. Mr. Batchelder cited working on the Teen Center project as an example, though the Commission has been doing this for years, most recently with the Hidden Brookline Committee, but also with programs such as the Asian American, Martin Luther King, and Russian American festivals.

Mr. Batchelder also suggested that for us to have efficient monthly meetings we perhaps ought to have as discussion items on the agenda only really important matters, and otherwise submit written reports, as was done this evening.

Mr. Batchelder agreed with having meetings around town, which could make it easier, perhaps, for more people to participate. The agenda should be modified to include items of importance to other groups or individuals,

(Further Discussion on Strategic Planning – continued)

which would promote dialogue. Co-Chairman Wang noted, however, that this would probably lengthen our meetings.

Ms. McNally agreed that it is important to meet around town and show people who we are, and to listen to their concerns. She agreed that we should plan our agenda in cooperation with other neighborhood groups to make sure that we are covering their issues and to make sure that we do not lose track of the time. She said that there are numerous places around town where we may meet.

Ms. Wong agreed that meeting around town is good, but asked what do we want to accomplish? Ms. Fischer said that we need to go into these meetings with a program. Ms. O'Halloran said that we need elaboration on what our mission is. Mr. Bressler said that we need to review the by-laws. He will re-send them to everyone. Mr. Heist said that we will have to communicate to neighborhood groups what our mission is. Dr. Schneider compared doing this to putting together a syllabus: we need to establish objectives and determine how we are going to meet those objectives; take an abstract notion and translate it into behaviors and goals we want to see adopted by people.

Discussion followed to Diverse the Curse and how we may maintain interest in the slogan and make it work for us.

Ms. O'Halloran said that if anything, fighting against discrimination is our mission.

Mr. Batchelder emphasized that we need to re-examine our 2006 strategic plan and re-determine our priorities.

Ms. Shapiro noted that while we are thinking of things to do we need to remind ourselves that in terms of staff Mr. Bressler is only one person. There is only so much that he can do. Therefore, Commission members need to realize that as we create additional projects members will have to work on those projects in between our monthly meetings.

Concerning our monthly meetings Ms. O'Halloran said that informational meetings are interesting, but education of Commission members should be a component of a meeting and not the entire meeting. She agreed with Mr. Batchelder's comments on structure and determining what program areas

(Further Discussion on Strategic Planning – continued)

we are willing to work on. She went on to say that we currently have relatively few committees and believed that every member should be on at least one committee. We all need to think about why we wanted to be on the Commission and what made us enthusiastic.

Co-Chairman Wang said that we want to go into the neighborhoods because we want to connect with different people. He agreed that we need to take another look at the by-laws.

Ms. McNally urged the Commission to meet at 22 High Street and suggested that BHA venues will bring us the greatest diversity. She said that it is as important for the Commission to be around town and talk with everybody as it is with the police, who do that all the time. Ms. Wong agreed with Ms. McNally's focus on BHA residents since it is important for us to interact with people who may be the least empowered and therefore do not have a voice in town affairs. She urged the Commission not be take leading roles in town projects that have already attracted significant participation, such as the Teen Center. Captain O'Leary also agreed that meeting at 22 High Street is a good way to go to reach out to people.

Mr. Batchelder said that Mr. Bressler should re-send the 2006 plan for everyone to review. Mr. Batchelder will also do up a questionnaire. Ms. Shapiro said that we should aim at only having three or four program priorities. Mr. Bressler will also send out the relevant by-laws.

Co-Chairman Wang offered a caveat that issues that may be important to others may not be ours. Ms. Shapiro suggested then that we may want to change our focus. Co-Chairman Wang also agreed with Ms. Wong on working with people who may not be empowered.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Human Relations-Youth Resources Commission

Meeting in the Public Safety Building
Community Room
350 Washington Street

May 21, 2008

Minutes

Members Attending

Marc Jones, Co-Chair
Jacob Effron
Rita McNally
Captain John O'Leary
Larry Onie
Agnes Rogers

Members Absent

Dr. Ed Wang, Co-Chair
Sandra Bakalar
Karen Fischer
David Heist
Kay O'Halloran
Donelle O'Neal
Enid Shapiro
Lena Wong

Associate Members Attending

Dr. Paula Schneider

Associate Members Absent

Honorable Herbert Goodwin

The Country Club Liaison Attending

Sandy Batchelder

School Committee Liaison Absent

Glenn Cunha

Staff Attending

C. Stephen Bressler, Director

Members of the Public Attending

John Ewing

Co-Chairman Jones opened the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Membership Changes

Co-Chairman Jones noted that Jacob Effron and Donelle O'Neal have been appointed as members of the Commission. There is still one full member vacancy on the Commission.

Hidden Brookline

The Hidden Brookline Committee participated in the annual Patriots Day celebration. Dr. Emilie Dawes Steele, a member of the committee and a

descendant of William Dawes (who along with Paul Revere warned that the “British are coming!”), spoke at the program. Interestingly, when the Daughters of the American Revolution representative read out the names of the Brookline residents who fought at the Battle of Lexington she omitted the names of the Brookline slaves who also fought there, apparently claiming that she did not know that there were slaves from the town who participated, even though the DAR plaque that is in the town hall lobby does mention those persons. Dr. Steele did note that Brookline slaves fought at the battle.

The committee is also attempting to place a plaque at the Old Burying Ground to acknowledge the presence in the cemetery of slaves, whose graves are not marked. The committee has met with the Cemetery Trustees, who have now indicated their opposition to such a plaque.

Faces of Brookline

Ms. McNally said that she would like to have the Commission sponsor a *Faces of Brookline* photo exhibit similar to projects recently undertaken in Medford and other communities. The photo exhibit would include 8 ½ x 11 pictures of residents plus biographies that would include comments on why they decided to reside in Brookline. Mr. Bressler has a photograph of the exhibit in Medford that he will send to Commission members, so everyone will see what the exhibit looks like. Ms. McNally said that the Medford exhibit (25 photographs) has been displayed at several locations throughout the city, including at schools, libraries, and the city hall.

Ms. McNally asked for volunteers to help work on this. Mr. Efron and Dr. Schneider said that they would help.

Meet with Artist John Ewing on Coolidge Corner-Dudley Square Public Art Project

Roxbury artist John Ewing gave a presentation on a public art project that he wishes to set up that seeks to have a live Internet video connection between Coolidge Corner and Dudley Square. The project would have a representation of Dudley Square at the Brookline Booksmith and a representation of Coolidge Corner at a location to be determined in Dudley Square. The idea is to re-establish a relationship between the two commercial areas that once existed long ago. Mrs. Rogers explained that many years ago people from Brookline would travel to Dudley Square to do shopping.

Mr. Ewing said that the project would also involve video discussions between people in Coolidge Corner and people in Dudley Square, including some planned conversations. It was suggested that Mrs. Rogers might participate in the project given her knowledge of the history of the two commercial areas. Mr. Ewing will contact her to schedule something at her convenience.

Further Discussion on Strategic Planning

Because of the low attendance at this evening's meeting it was suggested that discussion be postponed until the June meeting. Mr. Batchelder urged Commission members to complete and return the questionnaires to Mr. Bressler as soon as possible, so that they may be tabulated by our next meeting, and to review the matrix.

Discussion followed on the Commission's being pro-active versus reactive, on mandated versus not-mandated programs, on whether and how to utilize the *Diverse the Curse* – winning through diversity logo, and on correlating staff activities and priorities and those of the Commission.

New Business

Ms. McNally announced that the annual Roland Hayes event will take place on Sunday, June 8, 2008, at 3:15 p.m. at St. Paul's Church, 15 St. Paul Street. Tickets are \$10.00 and may be purchased at the Brookline Booksmith or at the door. The event is sponsored by The Legacy of Roland Hayes Community Celebration Committee. This year's program will feature Genethia Hogges, Soprano, the Boston Community Choir, and the Hamilton Garrett Music and Arts Academy.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.