

Selectmen's Diversity Committee

Minutes of the meeting of January 8th, 2014

Present: Nancy Daly; Bernard Greene; Marty Rosenthal; Elena Olson; Malcolm Cawthorne; Ken Kuornos; staff Rebecca Joachim and members of the public.

Documents received during meeting:

- * Diversity Committee Timeline for 2014
- * Marty Rosenthal's suggested meeting minutes
- * Bernard Greene's draft of an proposed version of the bylaw
- * "Why Don't You Wear Your Hair Natural? and Other Things Not to Say to Blacks"

The Meeting commenced at 6:10 pm on the first floor of the town hall. The committee reviewed the December 18th 2013 meeting minutes. There were 5 for favorable action, 0 no's and 1 abstention.

Lisa Paradis from the Recreation department was present for the meeting. She was asked to speak about the recreation department's programs for youth, what programs we need and whether or not a citizen's committee should be involved. About a year ago, an ad hoc group of town employees put together a report on out-of-school programs for youth as well as affordability and access. There is a draft executive summary which hasn't yet been approved by the School Committee, but which was requested by the Diversity Committee members. There is a deep partnership between the School Department and Recreation in serving the after-school needs of the Town's children, including the schools' athletic programs, during the school year. In the summer, the Recreation Department runs a number of their own programs for youth and they join the schools in serving youth who have to attend summer school due to their academic or behavioral needs. Those students do a half day of academic work and the other half is spent in programs run by the recreation department. The Recreation department hired at least 2 inclusion service specialists who work during the summer camps, as well as a recreation therapist who runs programs during the year and works with kids with disabilities and Individual Education Plans. Recreation received a grant to start a program to do job training and employ 6 high school kids per semester mainly within the Recreation department. The Recreation department also has athletics programs that are

similar to the schools' athletic programs, such as leagues for youth that have not made the sports teams in the high school. The Recreation Department also funds certain programs that the public schools do not, such as a middle school field hockey team.

Elena Olsen asked what was the goal of the out-of-school committee. Lisa Paradis explained that the original goal of the out-of-schools committee was to look at after school activities and gaps in out-of-school activities for youth.

Marty Rosenthal asked to what extent is the Recreation Department working along with the Extended Day programs at the schools. Lisa Paradis explained that the Extended Day programs at the schools are run by parent cooperatives. The Recreation Department runs programs for the overflow of students from those programs and for those students and for those students who prefer not to go to their schools' Extended Day. The Recreation department is licensed to handle 46 kids, but the program has between 35-45 kids.

When asked, Lisa Paradis explained that she does think that it would be helpful to have a town-wide staff coordinator for the out-of-school activities piece would be helpful. Many more children can be served if there was more consistency with use of the athletic facilities (mostly the school facilities) as well as coordination. The Recreation Department does their own advertisement and outreach for different programs. The Recreation Department already works with the appointed members of the Town's Parks and Recreation Commission.

Bernard Greene brought up the point that youth is more than just youth in school, what about those that are not in school/not in college; there needs to be programming for them as well. The recreation department deals a lot with younger youth (middle school), but the teen center also has programs for teens as well. Bernard Greene suggested that perhaps a role of the Human Relations/Youth Resources Commission could be to figure out what are the issues and needs of the youth and from that information decide what types of programs to create. Malcolm Cawthorne asked whether the boom of younger children in town is affecting the Recreation Department. Lisa Paradis explained that it is getting difficult for the recreation department to schedule because all the teams are growing, and there is always a need for more volunteers.

Marty Rosenthal asked if there is any specialized outreach in terms of diversity, for example to METCO parents etc. Lisa Paradis explained that there is not; it basically is first come, first serve, but Metco students who don't live in Brookline are allowed to participate. And, at least once or twice a year, the Recreation

Department has focus groups at the Housing Authority buildings to better understand the needs of that population. Marty suggested that, while HRYRC definitely has not been—and cannot be—an overall coordinator for our many great youth programs, first, some forum is needed for more regular interdepartmental conversations and coordination, maybe including some NGO's like the Teen Center; and second, the HRYRC should still and mainly play a role in promoting its diversity mission as it relates to the various youth programs.

The Committee then discussed Nancy Daly's timeline for completing the proposed bylaw by the warrant's closing for the Spring Town Meeting. Elena Olson is continuing to work on the purpose statement for the Commission. Marty Rosenthal reiterated his remarks before the Board of Selectmen indicating his sense that the committee will not be able to complete a bylaw in time for the close of the warrant. He also noted that the Fair Housing area—the 800 pound elephant in all of Brookline's diversity issues-- seems to be very complex, from the handout that Rita McNally had given the Committee the previous meeting, and that Committee hasn't yet had any discussion about it. He also wondered whether a public hearing should be held before proposing a warrant article, not just afterwards as mandated; but before it, the Committee would need to try to focus on certain issues for public input.

The committee then took public comments and questions.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.