

Selectmen's Diversity Committee
Minutes of the meeting of January 29th, 2014

Present: Nancy Daly; Bernard Greene; Rita McNally; Marty Rosenthal; Elena Olson; staff Rebecca Joachim and members of the public.

Documents received during meeting:

- Bernard Greene's revised draft of a proposed version of the bylaw
- January 8th Diversity Committee meeting minutes
- Nancy Daly's draft of a proposed version of the bylaw
- The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Town of Brookline 2013
- Elena Olson's draft for a proposed mission statement for the commission

The Meeting commenced at 6:28 pm on the sixth floor of the town hall. The committee reviewed the January 8th 2014 meeting minutes. The committee decided that some revisions needed to be made to those minutes and will vote on the January 8th 2014 minutes at the following meeting.

The committee reviewed Bernard Greene's revised draft of the bylaw. Bernard Greene made the point that if the committee does not work hard to create a new bylaw for a warrant article for the upcoming Town Meeting that others may file their own warrant articles which may get passed and all this committee's work would be superfluous. Elena Olson made the point that if the committee decides on the big picture (ie the major components that the commission will address), we can then write the bylaw based on those choices. Bernard Greene wrote out a table that explains what the bylaw now has and what needs to be added by the diversity committee:

Current bylaw includes:

- establishment of department
- establishment of commission
- composition of commission
- powers and duties of commission
- diversity of HR/YR
- rules & regulations
- annual report

-information and cooperation

The diversity committee has added:

-Mission of the commission

Bernard proposed that a subcommittee work on the establishment of department, establishment of the commission and the composition of the commission, another subcommittee work on powers and duties. Elena, Bernard, Rita and Nancy have all agreed to work together on powers and duties. Marty Rosenthal is not worried that anyone else will write a warrant article and still feels that the committee does not have enough time to complete this bylaw by the deadline. He still feels we must do it carefully and thoroughly since bylaws are binding.], we should alter some other department and commission bylaws (e.g. Fair Housing, etc.) to reflect cooperation with the Commission: and if we show we're serious and why we need more time, Town Meeting is unlikely to unnecessarily to rush ahead. Nancy Daly asked Marty to list some of his ideas for the powers and duties of the commission.

Marty Rosenthal's very quick proposed ideas for powers and duties for the commission, using the template of the current bylaw:

-The commission should have a leadership role as to promoting its Mission in all parts of town government and perhaps in non-government areas (e.g. NGO's and citizen education) as well.

-There should be some involvement with the school department/committee and library.

-The commission should play a role in refining/improving procedures for investigating and resolving complaints –especially by members of the public –against town employees, such as simplified versions of the Police complaint and discipline procedures, including a limited but ultimate Board of Selectmen role.

-This commission must be staffed by a department head—unlike the revision to the bylaw that was passed last Spring--to give this Commission and it's goals the stature and clout it needs, citing Sandra Borders. of the Governor's office, in response to a question by Frank Farlow at the May Diversity Forum chaired by Nancy Daly (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxyThA-N44w>).

Overall, Marty Rosenthal believes that the bylaw must include specifics on many subjects such as housing, involvement with the school committee, and with other committees/departments.

The committee reviewed Nancy Daly's proposed partial draft for the bylaw. The title is up for discussion. Bernard suggests that there needs to be a subcommittee to deal with information and cooperation (including communication by the ombudsmen role for example). Rita makes the point that the role of the chief diversity officer probably should not give specific, personal details to the commission, but he/she should provide the commission with general reports about

complaints against the town. Nancy explains that it is a problem to give the commission adjudicatory power on employee issues when the town is not released to explain the other side of the story. Privacy laws compel the Town to stay silent about many employee matters. Rita explains that people on the commission have a responsibility to know what other groups in the town are doing so that the work is done well and supportively.

Nancy asked Marty Rosenthal to further explain his thoughts on the commission vis-a-vis the schools. Marty Rosenthal explained that he does not propose involvement on specific actions, but wants to define an overall role of input into various policies related to the Commission's mission. Because of the School Committee's (and Superintendent's) independence under state law; this area is even trickier to enact than, say, the also-elected Library Trustees, and probably needs Selectmen involvement. Perhaps there should be a school committee member liaison on the commission. Nancy Daly suggested that perhaps the commission meet with the Selectmen and the School Committee for periodic dialogue. There needs to be work done on the composition of the commission. In relation to composition, Rita McNally suggests having some sort of penalty for a commission member missing a few different meetings in a row to make sure that a quorum always occurs so that the commission does not become inactive.

Elena Olson and Nancy Daly both suggested that a 15 member commission may be too large and cause some members to be relaxed about their attendance. Marty Rosenthal believes a bigger commission may be better if the Commission is given a great amount of duties, to divide up some responsibilities into subcommittees. Nancy suggested perhaps having 11 members but also have a few auxiliary members that can be called upon. Rita suggested having a training meeting to make sure that all commission members be trained on the commission's bylaw. There needs to be a discussion on all the rules and regulations that will be adopted by the commission.

The committee then took public comments.

The Next Meetings will be Wednesday February 12th and Wednesday February 26th 2014 at 6:00 pm.

The drafting subcommittee (Elena Olson, Bernard Greene, Nancy Daly and Rita McNally) will meet on Monday February 3rd either at 7:30 am or 6:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.