

**BROOKLINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
MEETING TUESDAY JUNE 13, 2023, 7:00 P.M.
(ONLINE VIA ZOOM AND RECORDED)**

AGENDA

- I. Administrative details: **Meeting started at 7:05pm.**
 - a. Welcome: Attendees – Ms. Felina Silver-Robinson, Ms. Elizabeth Stillman, Ms. Aileen Lee, Ms. Rebecca Stone, Ms. Carol Caro, Ms. Hadassah Margolis, Ms. Meenakshi Garodia and Dr. Lucy Chie. ODICR Staff - Caitlin Starr. Absentees – Ms. Neela Kaushik, Ms. Nicole McClelland.
 - b. Vote to approve minutes from meeting of May 2023. Moved – Ms. Stillman, Seconded – Ms. Garodia. Commissioners unanimously voted for the May minutes.

- II. Public Comment: Public attendee – Ms. Cynthia Levay-Arnfeld.
 - a. Ms. Silver-Robinson welcomed Ms. Levay-Arnfeld to the meeting, Ms. Levay-Arnfeld is one of two candidates for BCW commissioners. Ms. Le-Vay-Arnfeld introduced herself.

- III. Updates on New and Continuing Commissioners: Ms. Cynthia Levay-Arnfeld and Ms. Julia Khazan are waiting to complete the process to be appointed to BCW. Ms. Caro is reappointed. Ms. Nicole McClelland’s term is up, and she did not seek re-appointment to the BCW.

- IV. Childcare list-discussion of placement/distribution with or without disclaimer (circulated separately).
 - a. Because the list was not distributed to all commissioners to be reviewed before this meeting, this topic will be deferred to the next meeting. Ms. Silver-Robinson will email out the document to the BCW commissioners for review.

- V. Decision on whether or not to invite Jo-Anne L. Ochalla, LICSW from the Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital to come and give a community driven presentation.
 - a. Ms. Silver-Robinson is interested in creating an event / a webinar for Ms. Ochalla to do a presentation she developed to share resources with the community about domestic violence. The presentation is for those who are affected by domestic violence or those who provide support to victims of DV – i.e., providers in the community or Housing Authority who may not be aware of Ms. Ochalla’s program. Dr. Chie supported the idea of making this a webinar and suggested the event be in October since it is domestic violence awareness month.
 - b. There was discussion of who the audience was for this presentation. Ms. Silver-Robinson should consult with Doreen Gallagher to talk about audience and what would be the best way to disseminate this information.

- VI. Updates on Spring Annual Town Meeting: WA 20 – Reproductive and Gender Health Equity Access Law.
- a. Ms. Stone reported that the WA passed overwhelmingly at Town Meeting, with zero “no” votes, 8 abstentions, and 7 people who did not vote even though they were present. Many TMMs expressed thanks for the efforts of BCW as lead petitioners of WA 20, for raising the topic and keeping it present. As Dr. Chie has stated before, providers felt supported by this article because it holds people accountable for violating the safe haven law in Brookline / MA. This warrant article allowed individuals; women and LGBTQ+ identified individuals to feel that something is getting done and it also opens the opportunity for more to be done. Another important moment was when Val Frias, School Committee member, one of the petitioners on the WA and TMM, spoke about the vote of the School Committee – to commit to changing their policies to align with the Reproductive and Gender Health Equity Access Law, which now includes the Menstrual Product Access by-law. Ms. Frias is eager to continue working together on policy and curriculum around sex education in schools.
 - b. Ms. Stone also shared that two important leaders in the Brookline schools, one of whom has worked closely with the BCW, are resigning from their positions: Haeyoung Koh, Assistant Director in Educational Equity and Jenee Uttaro, Senior Director of Educational Equity. Jenee Uttaro has been a wonderful partner with the BCW’s work on consent and health education, and Ms. Stone said she was personally heartbroken that she was leaving. Dr. Chie agreed and said Haeyoung Koh had been very important to the AAPI community on inclusion and equity.
- VII. Title IX, Police Officers in Schools.
- a. Ms. Silver Robinson reported that several people on the Domestic Violence Roundtable are interested in having School Resource Officers (SROs) be placed back into the high school. Part of the reason was that they heard that there had not been a lot of safeguarding about how to be safe on social media and who to report social media concerns to. Ms. Silver Robinson shared that she had a conversation with Select Board chair, Bernard Green, on placing the SROs (School Resource Officers) back in the high schools. Commissioners expressed differing views about SROs in schools and wanted to be sure that BCW was not perceived as having a position on this issue as it has not been discussed. Ms. Silver Robinson clarified that she was just reporting the discussion of the Domestic Violence Roundtable. Everyone agreed that students should have a place to go to report and have support with social media concerns, i.e., social media bullying, or inappropriate content in social media. Ms. Stillman suggested that BCW can look into whether there is consistent public reporting of these types of incidents in the schools, as should be done annually. All agreed the BCW should keep paying attention to how the schools is reporting and responding to issues around harassment of any kind.
- VIII. Discussion of and setting calendar for meetings and events for 2023-2024 Commission.

- a. Day/time for meetings going forward (Zoom available until April 2025). **July 5th 2023 is next BCW meeting.**
- IX. Discussion of BCW created documentary series on Women at Work in Brookline.
- a. Ms. Stillman, Ms. Caro, Ms. Margolis, and Ms. Garodia (BCW working group) met with Kathy Bisbee (E.D. of Brookline Interactive Group) to discuss details of this project. Ms. Stillman has been in communication with the Town about filming in the fire stations and interviewing female fire fighters. Ms. Stone wondered if the individuals who are potential interviewees will be comfortable with being interviewed as they are still working for the Town. She suggested that some individuals may not be comfortable doing an interview on camera about gender discrimination issues. Ms. Caro said that the interview questions will be sent out ahead of time to the interviewees, questions such as how you got interested in working this job for and what their day-to-day work life looks like. Questions will be centered on their work/life experiences; information-driven instead of gender-based issues driven. Former SB Chair (and now BIG Asst. Dir) Heather Hamilton is involved and already shared a list of potential interviewees; most are heads of departments, Ms. Caro hopes to interview those below director level, folks who are working ‘on the ground.’ This should be a series of interviews that will encompass different individuals at different levels/positions in government.
- X. Old & New Business
- a. Files needed to be sent out before next meeting: childcare list with disclaimer language, BCW calendar template. Ms. Silver-Robinson will do this before next month’s meeting.
 - b. Ms. Silver-Robinson also shared that at the Leagues of Women Voters voted to co-sponsor with the BCW Ms. Stone’s questionnaire about why people in Brookline choose not to run for re-election.

Meeting ended at 8:15pm.
Next meeting – July 5, 2023