

**BROOKLINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN**  
**MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2ND, 2020**  
**7 PM (ONLINE VIA ZOOM)**

**COMMISSIONERS ATTENDING:** MEENAKSHI GARODIA, HADASSAH MARGOLIS, ELIZABETH STILLMAN, REBECCA STONE, FELINA SILVER ROBINSON, HOMA SARABI, NICOLE MCCLELLAND

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** DR. GLORIA RUDISCH

**ALSO ATTENDING:** SARAH KAPLAN (ODICR), DR. LUCY CHIE

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm

1. Review of the Calendar: Ms. Stone explained that the Town Meeting warrant closes tomorrow (Sept 3). After it is published, the Advocacy subcommittee will look through it and recommend articles for BCW review. Community Supports subcommittee will need to consider whether we can move forward with the coat drive given COVID. Town Meeting has set aside 6 nights-if the last night is needed, it conflicts with our next scheduled meeting; will deal with that if and when it becomes an issue.

Ms. Stone and Jane Piercy have begun talking about developing a “women’s calendar” community resource for Brookline, modeled on what the BOOST (Brookline Out of State) group does to gather and let people know about political work, meetings, efforts. Ms. Stone will create a google doc for events to be entered. It is a work in progress. Ms. Sarabi noted that Boston has a calendar and that it allows for event submissions. We could also have a submission form that allows otherwise unheard groups to enter events.

2. Vote to approve minutes from the meeting of Aug 5, 2020. On a motion from Ms. Garodia, seconded by Ms. Silver Robinson, the minutes were approved.
3. Public Comment: Ms. Chie likes the women’s calendar idea and supports that.
4. Updates/Reports
  - i) August online event: Women’s Life During COVID (Homa, Hadassah, Nicole): Ms. McClelland had circulated her notes on the meeting via email (See Appendix A). Ms. Sarabi reported there was a good number of participants (12 at peak), with diversity of ages and perspectives. She feels it was successful. People who participated were inspired to continue. We have the emails of participants for further contact. One participant was quite eager to continue doing this on a very regular basis. Ms. Silver Robinson said that she missed the event because the email with the zoom info got lost. Suggest next time email the sign-on information the night before the event as a reminder. Ms. Margolis suggests that we create a database or listserv of interested people. It was posted again on the BCW Facebook page the evening of the event. Maybe we need to get permission to gather emails and see if people are willing to let us email them. The Community Support subcommittee will discuss whether and how to do similar future events.

- ii) Response to OML letter from Cindy Creem (Rebecca): Commissioners were copied on the response from Cindy Creem to our letter about how the COVID relaxations of the Open Meeting Law to allow remote meetings have helped attendance. Sen. Creem said in her response that this was a priority for the COVID-19 task force and she is planning to continue advocating on this issue. Two Town Meeting Members had expressed concerns about our letter, but Ms. Stone assured them that we were not arguing for an end to the OML, only for those relaxations that allow remote participation to form a quorum. Other Brookline boards/commissions have been supportive.
  - iii) Women Who Inspire Video (Liz, Homa): The video from Daniella Kaplan was at a penultimate stage and it was turned over to Ms. Sarabi to finish. We are trying to get it out before school starts on 9/16. Ms. Sarabi and Ms. Stone were concerned about the quality of the recordings for the student essay part of the video, and Ms. Sarabi was concerned that the video was very long. Priority is having a video that everyone feels good about, so will look at different ways to have the essays portrayed in the video. Brookline Thrives is planning to use it for fundraising.
  - iv) BHS #MeToo (Hadassah): Commissioners all received an email re: Title IX. Ms. Margolis stated that Alex and Meg were pleased after our last meeting (when they joined us) and felt supported. They are moving forward with SHARPS Warriors focusing on addressing a safer atmosphere at BHS, better information on Title IX reporting, and the sex education curriculum, esp. re: consent. SHARP will meet 1-3 times a month. They are happy to have a BCW liaison who is a licensed social worker (Ms. Margolis) and they are considering what we can do as a commission to support them. Ms. Garodia will be liaison to School Committee's subcommittee on Curriculum and Ms. Stillman to their Policy subcommittee. They will continue to work with Ms. Margolis as a team to support the students. Ms. Chie offered that she is an OB/GYN and on the Board of Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts (PPLM) which has a significant educational program. Ms. Chie is happy to make that connection if it would be helpful. Ms. Stone noted that while some Brookline schools have used the PP sex ed curriculum, it has not been uniformly adopted, nor has the Healthy Youth Act been passed by the state House of Representatives, so even in Massachusetts there is an uphill battle for more enlightened sex education.
  - v) Recruitment – 3 remaining seats to fill (Rebecca): Aileen Lee has submitted paperwork to become a commissioner. Ms. Stone has worked with students on Brookline becoming a city, and Ms. Stone is thinking about reaching out to them since we can have commissioners as young as 16. Student commissioners can have a one year term. The commission supports reaching out to these students, so Ms. Stone will do that. The BHS students who came to the prior meeting have been informed about the open seats by Ms. Margolis. Ms. Stone would like to have all 11 seats filled by the end of the year at the latest.
5. Communications Protocols & Norms: Event publicity and where/how to share BCW information: Discussed developing a mailing list (Constant Contact or start a google group). Need to figure out how to add people and keep the list current. Ms. Garodia says her experience with MailChimp for Driscoll afterschool was a good experience. We can

research platforms. Ms. Kaplan (ODICR) shares items that we ask to have shared, but ODICR will not share its PR list with us. She also shares with her personal contacts in the community. Each commission may need to create and maintain a list on their own. Ms. Stone suggested we should at least have an idea of who our items are sent to so we do not duplicate efforts. Ms. Kaplan explained their list includes local press and PTOs. Ms. Silver Robinson and Ms. Stone will start to put together a master list.

Ms. Stone asks each commissioner to please let her know about suggestions and experiences related to list management. Ms. Margolis asks if we should send suggested names/contacts/social media outlets for the list? Ms. Stone answers affirmatively. We are still trying to have a commissioner or other person be our social media person; it's complicated as we need someone to be in charge of what is being posted and to stay consistent. Right now only Ms. Stone has posting privileges to our Facebook page, but it is not an interactive page. We need to be careful with FB that it does not become a toxic site for women. There are enough of those already. There is balance between communication and negative exposure. In answer to a question from Ms. Kaplan, Ms. Stone said we were not using FB as an RSVP site to events. Perhaps we should do that in the future. There are other ways to do PR, for example "Panda." Ms. Sarabi agrees that we need a person to coordinate all of this. Ms. Sarabi would be willing to take on some of this with a partner/collaborator. Ms. Garodia volunteers to help, and Ms. Stone also agrees to work with them.

6. Subcommittee assignments, possible vote to reduce subcoms to 2 (Legis/Advocacy and Supports); mission/parameters/next steps for each:  
Subcommittee assignments were circulated earlier today amongst commissioners. Is everyone comfortable with assignments? Subcommittee charges are subject to evolution as the subcommittees begin operating and discuss their objectives. RE: liaisons, Ms. Stone will let the organizations where we have decided to have liaisons know that we will be doing this. Ms. Stone and the subcommittee chairs are always a good resource if there are questions/issues. In response to Ms. Sarabi, Ms Stone explained that other commissions/committees have liaisons. The point is to expand our connections in Brookline and be present in related venues to amplify issues of gender equity.

Re: Subcommittees, Ms. Margolis and Ms. McClelland are the subcommittee chairs of Community Supports and Legis/Advocacy, respectively. They will need to convene the subcommittees-probably once a month. They are subject to the OML, so these must be posted meetings (each subcommittee will need to post the meeting at least 48 hours prior -- not including weekends -- per Ms. Kaplan. While we are virtual and during Ms. Starr's leave, Ms. Kaplan appreciates advance notice as she is currently staffing numerous commissions. Not sure anyone besides a Town staffer can host a meeting on the Town's Zoom.gov account. The Town has a limited number of accounts right now. Ms. Stone will follow up on that. Discussion of whether, per Ms. Margolis, we can use breakout rooms during a meeting. The Town Zoom may not support it because of the open meeting law (each breakout room would have to be open to public). Ms. Kaplan will check with IT and Ms. Stone will ask other commission chairs how they are doing things, but Ms. Kaplan is fairly certain the answer will be no.

Re: liaisons, Ms. Garodia asked about the requirements. Ms. Stone will write an email to introduce liaisons to the relevant chairs. Liaisons should follow and peruse meeting schedules and agendas for relevant items. Ms. Garodia asks about how we work towards change in the various committees. Ms. Stone explained that the liaison role is about determining what is going on rather than active participation. Unless there is an invitation from the other committee to collaborate, we are there as guests/members of the public. Commissioners should use their discretion about when to attend a meeting. The role is information seeking. Ms. Stillman and Ms. Garodia both reported difficulty finding the school subcommittee meeting information and agendas. Ms. Stone suggests that we write to Robin Coyne, secretary of the school committee, she can give information about the subcommittees and can distribute agendas.

Discussion of how to schedule subcommittee meetings. OML is not violated by emails regarding scheduling of subcommittee meetings. No need to cc Ms. Stone on these. Ms. Stone will work with Ms. McClelland and Ms. Margolis about the subcommittee communication. Subcommittees do not have power to make decisions for the entire commission; they bring items to the commission. Vetted recommendations are helpful.

Quorums: Ms. McClelland asks about new members and Ms. Stone says each subcommittee is supposed to have 5 members, so a quorum will be 3 people present. Ms. Kaplan stated a quorum for a fully seated BCW would be 6, so 5 person subcommittees is the limit. Ms. McClelland clarified that public hearings for warrant articles the BCW is considering would be before the entire commission, not the subcommittee. However, the subcommittee can recommend a limit of the number of articles we wish to hold public hearings about.

Ms. Stone noted that the original plan to have a celebrations subcommittee did not make sense in light of the interests expressed by commissioners. Ms. McClelland suggests we create ad hoc event committees of non-commissioners when needed. We agree this is a better method. Ms. Stillman agreed to chair the next event on Woman of the Year/Women who Inspire. Motion to decommission celebrations subcommittee by Ms. Stone, seconded by Ms. Stillman. Passes unanimously.

7. New Business: Ms. Kaplan is working on an event with the League of Women Voters Brookline, Oct. 6th, a free zoom screening of Rigged, a film by the American Issues Initiative. There will be a panel. She will send it to us and asked that all commissioners share. Ms. Silver Robinson is also on the LWVB board.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:44.