



Somerville Human Rights Commission
Monthly Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2011

The monthly public meeting of the Human Rights Commission was held at 6:30pm at SCALE in the TAB at 167 Holland Street (basement level, room #103). Attending commissioners: co-chair Ashraf Hegazy, John Robinson, and co-chair Barry Rafkind. Also attending: Ellen Frith and Sonja Darai (director of the Office of Somerville Commissions supporting the HRC).

1) Director's Report on Cases

- A complaint was emailed in by a concerned resident regarding the FamilyRadio billboards for May 21 2011 end of the world forecast. When looking through the group's website the complainant found anti-LGBT material purporting that gay pride will bring the end of the world on 5/21/11. The HRC discussed the fact that the billboards had no hate language on the billboard (but on the website in some internal documents). The HRC had jurisdiction on the issue noting that the website information falls under free speech.
- After review of a report submitted by an independent human rights investigator regarding the Mirza/Moccia April 2010 hate crime investigation (report sent to commissioners 3/18/11), the Human Rights Commission made a unanimous decision to close the case. The HRC asked to be informed if further information comes forward on the April 2010 incident.

2) Immigrant Police Dialogue Session Update

- Meeting held on 5/9 with Chief Tom Pasquarello. The group discussed a new drug, Opana, which is 2x as strong as oxycontin. The group discussed teen girls as a high risk group for smokeable heroine, dating and peer violence, and vulnerability to predators in prostitution. The IPDS approved the Somerville Commission for Women to lead efforts to learn more and create promotion of awareness to parents and teens.

3) Update on HRC Applications & Recruitment. The Office of Commissions is interested to plan another commissions workshop and other events to increase outreach and raising awareness.

- The HRC discussed planning a "know your rights" workshop in September 2011 in conjunction with a commissions workshop.

4) Snow Removal Committee Update. The Commission discussed which department is responsible for snow removal, who clears ramps, the need for data from 311 on complaint calls, and a clearer process for reporting of unshoveled walks. Sonja to take back questions to committee participants (currently WalkBoston and the City's Communications Department; with collaboration with the Commissions for People with Disabilities, Human Rights, and Women; as well as Shape Up Somerville as needed)

5) New Business

- The HRC discussed bus stop parking by the Thai Restaurant and the liquor store. The commissioners want to look at how to resolve persistent illegal parking in handicap spaces, what is the after hours protocol for parking attendants and who responds to calls. Commissioners recommended assigning one T & P parking attendant just to handicap parking issues at most pernicious offenders and time periods.
- The HRC would like to organize Know Your Rights trainings. The commissioners requested Sonja to look at minimum numbers, co-sponsors, and look at holding the workshop at SCAT or in East Somerville for better attendance.

- The HRC discussed collaborating more closely with the Somerville Commission for Women for shared topics of interest, commissions outreach workshops, and know your rights workshops. Sonja will raise with the SCW at its May monthly meeting.

6) Planning Upcoming HRC Meetings and Setting Agenda

- Summer HRC Meetings:

- JUNE 13: 6:30pm at SCALE in the TAB at 167 Holland Street (basement level, room #103).
- JULY CANCELLED: The commission decided that the **July monthly meeting is canceled** for summer break.
- AUGUST 8: 6:30pm at SCALE in the TAB at 167 Holland Street (basement level, room #103).

- The June 13 HRC Agenda is:

The monthly public meeting of the Human Rights Commission will be at 6:30pm at SCALE in the TAB at 167 Holland Street (basement level, room #103)

- 1) Director's Report on Cases
- 2) Immigrant Police Dialogue Session Updates
 - Meeting on June 13 with Chief Tom Pasquarello
- 3) Update on HRC Recruitment
- 4) Old Business
 - Snow Removal Committee
 - Know Your Rights Outreach
 - Collaboration with Somerville Commissions
- 5) New Business
- 6) Plan Agenda for August 2011 Monthly HRC Meeting
 - The next monthly public meeting of the Human Rights Commission may be at 6:30pm on **August 8** at SCALE in the TAB at 167 Holland Street (basement level, room #103).

The Human Rights Commission is supported by the City of Somerville's Health Department through:

The Office of Somerville Commissions

- Somerville Commission for Women
- Human Rights Commission
- Multicultural Community Outreach and Issues
- LGBT Community Outreach and Issues

Program of the Health Department

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