

Minutes
The HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Of the City of Framingham
Memorial Building, 150 Concord Street, Framingham, MA 01702
508-532-5540

Human Relations Commissioners:

Robert Anspach (Chair), Michael Genovese (Vice-chair), Timothy Lee (Clerk), Eleanor Anbinder, Bianca Blackman, Dana Essigmann, Millie Gonzalez, Renee Harper, Erica Mash, Renan Pinheiro, José Román, Connie Warner

HRC Advisors: William Robinson, Ralph Woodward

Minutes of the HRC meeting, January 9, 2020

Commissioners Present: Robert Anspach, Timothy Lee, Bianca Blackman, Erica Mash, Dana Essigmann, , Renan Pinheiro, Renee Harper, Connie Warner

Commissioners Absent: Michael Genovese, Eleanor Anbinder, Millie Gonzalez, José Román

Advisor Present: Bill Robinson

Members of the public present: David Behrstock, Manu Sharma

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 PM.

Motion made to accept minutes of 12/12/19 made, seconded and passed.

Discussion began on follow-up to the forum at the December meeting. There was an advertisement that went around, involving Hoops and Homework. We still have to be aware.

Should set up another meeting to follow up and see how progressing in the football program, what are the changes.

Introduced educator at the McAuliffe charter school, David Behrstock. Project involving 7th graders, for which he is asking for assistance.

The school year is divided into trimesters, and they are doing a project on human rights. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and activists through time. As a case study, they chose Framingham this year. They are now halfway through the trimester. Help kids understand how demographics have changed in Framingham.

Four parts:

Homelessness. Trica Alpert can help.

Food insecurity. Alicia Blaise, Daniel's Table.

Racism. Rev. J. Anthony Lloyd.

Undocumented immigrants and immigration. Leona ____.

Will look at these issues in Framingham, match up.

Globally – successes, call to action. Will make a video PSA for Framingham Access TV. Event on March 18 to present findings. Would be meaningful to grade 7 students.

“When am I ever going to use this?” (referring to what learn in school). This project is relevant; reading about people their own age.

About 140 kids in 7th grade. In last week of February, will be focused on 4 locations. Interview human rights defender, or talking to people in these 4 categories.

This is a multi-year project, from year to year.

Human Relations Commission can be the receiver of the end product and project results.

Discussed a lot of resources, suggested by Commissioners, for David to investigate, follow-up on, and consult.

Question about participation at school about anti-Semitic incident. This has been discussed. Other incidents have been discussed, positions taken, about how people are treated.

Manu Sharma spoke – what do kids here in Framingham do to entertain themselves? To play sports?

Have talked about contamination at Mary Dennison park. Judy Grove was involved, and also advocated for the skate park. Now, has advocated for a park at Irving St.

In addition to Pop Warner, some kids not addressed. Looking for sports outlet. Used to go to parks as a kid. Used to play teams from other parks in Framingham. There used to be about 12-14 parks.

Flag football, frisbee, soccer, and others. A free program. At each park, 20, 30, or 40 kids involved. Kids took pride in their own park.

Now, kids not involved and interacting, socially. A disconnect. Arts, crafts could get kids together. Quality of sports is not as good. Would be good if we could stimulate this. Kids with nothing to do.

Could connect with Framingham Parks and Recreation to do activities. Helps kids with identity.

Are there programs that can help kids academically? A prerequisite to participate in sports. Keep up with their grades.

Today's technology, does it interfere? Discussion. When growing up, TV watching was limited. There can be a positive peer pressure. If there are alternatives to technology, peer pressure can be positive, if there are opportunities. A social environment, supervised. Once kids realize culture is there, they will buy in. Phone will be a tool, rather than a distraction.

Cost to play sports can be a limiting factor.

Need to make it as convenient as possible for the kids.

School choice broke up the neighborhood. Kids have their own teachers now. Parents working 2 or 3 jobs. There is the language barrier.

There could be a day when kids could get together and be mentors.

Immigrants and interpreters an issue at the high school. Not participating in social activities as a result.

Get data from Parks and Recreation about what's available.

Discussion about available gyms around town. If make use of, would have a lot of kids.

Question about busing service provided for ski trips.

Discussion about supervising the kids. A lot of parents could volunteer.

More discussion about other places, programs for gyms.

What is Parks and Recreation doing to bridge gaps? Maybe they could present to us. Parks and Recreation is a small office; they might need to expand.

There is a gang problem in Framingham. Have to try to attract kids.

Discussion of liability.

A problem of Southside and derogatory comments. Would like to see something downtown. Might be ____ for to connect to gyms.

A lot of kids left out. There has be something for everybody.

Could get Parks and Recreation (Trish Powell) to come to our next meeting, with information.

Could get a classroom, do some tutoring, along with a gym.

Ellie just needs a date to have a second Innocent Convicts forum at the Temple Beth Am. Maybe March or April. If April, need to consider school vacation, holidays. Will try for week of April 27.

Pride Event planned by City. Opportunity for anyone to help with planning. Ellie, Dana, Renan expressed interest.

Will do something for Black History month?

Connie spoke about a foundation established by her employer, Sensata Foundation. Discussion of grants; looking for suggestions in the community. Taking opportunities now through April for next year. Suggestions (nonprofits) were discussed, including veterans organizations.

Framingham Coming Together has presented a report, "Healing in the Community."

The State of the City address will be on Thursday, January 16, 2020, at Nevins Hall. RSVP at <http://bit.ly/367AYp9>

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.

The next scheduled meeting is on Thursday, February 13, in a room to be determined.