



**Human Rights Commission
Remote Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 16, 2021 – 5:30 P.M.**

This meeting was recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law.

Present: Commission members: Mauiza Alves, Jennifer Beloff, Toni Borge, Hannah Kimberley, Michea McCaffrey, and Paul Wasserman

Also present: Holly Dougwillo, Human Resources Director; Jen Holmgren, City Councilor

We reviewed and approved the minutes from May 17, 2021 meeting.

Translation Device Pilot: Jen Holmgren and Mauiza Alves met with Joanne Senos, Gloucester City Clerk to discuss the possible need for a translation device at the Clerk's office. Ms. Senos noted that there were several folks available to translate in sign language, Spanish, Italian, and Portugues (**Jen and Mauiza, did I miss a language, or were these it?**). Also, because of the pandemic, the Clerk's Office sends marriage licenses out via mail and building permits are now online. Ms. Senos noted that there was not a large concern for translation needs, so there is no need for a translation device. However, we also discussed getting a sign at city hall that says we have translation services. Councilor Holmgren will write an email to Holly Dougwillo, Krisna Basu, and Chris Sicuranza re: putting up signage. Councilor Holmgren will also check to see if public meeting notices include notices re: TTY.

The City Council Civility Resolution passed unanimously with all councilors signing on to the document.

Gloucester 400 update: Hannah Kimberley and Toni Borge reported that Nicki Richon Schoel had communicated with Reverend Janet Parsons, Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church. Reverend Parsons noted that when the Gloucester 400 folks planned their first event, which took place at the church, church members worked to make sure that the message was that the indigenous people were here long before the European settlers, and that Gloucester history didn't begin in 1623. Since that event focused on the first century of European settlement, they invited Mary Ellen Lepionka and Stephanie Buck to talk about first encounters and the lives of the natives. Toni Borge and Hannah Kimberley noted that the Cape Ann Slavery and Abolition project, which is a joint project of the Gloucester UU church and the Rockport UU church. www.capeannslavery.org might be something that the Gloucester 400 folks might want to link on their website. Since the pandemic, Reverend Parsons has not been in touch with the organizers, but she certainly hopes that the work done by the Cape Ann Slavery project will be recognized in public events.

Discussion on Hate/Anti-Semitism: Paul Wasserman gave a thorough presentation re: American Jews facing increased threats of violence and harassment both online and offline as well as other discussion on hate crimes in America and specifically Massachusetts. Paul noted that Rabbi Lewis would be happy to speak with the GHRC. Paul will invite him to our September meeting. Likewise, Councilor Holmgren will invite the superintendent or the assistant superintendent to speak to the GHRC about what is being taught about bigotry in the Gloucester schools.

Michea McCaffrey and the Gloucester Racial Justice Team are still awaiting the results on the “Understanding the Experiences of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Gloucester Community Members and/or People that Love and/or Support them” survey. They expect to have concrete data by the fall. Link to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B888VCV>

Discussion on mandates/non-mandates regarding vaccinations and face coverings: Mayor Theken has received several emails (Subject line: Mandates Violate the Constitution and Basic Human Rights) re: vaccines and masks and human rights

In an email to Councilor Holmgren, Max Schenk, Assistant Director of Gloucester Health Department, noted, “At this point, to my knowledge, there are no plans for local government mandates regarding vaccinations and face coverings - that is a decision made at the Administration and Board of Health's level. The Board continues to support the CDC's and State's recommendations and requirements. Please note that neither the Health Department or Board of Health have jurisdiction over whether private businesses choose to apply more restrictive requirements for face coverings or vaccinations.”

Hannah Kimberley, Paul Wasserman, and Councilor Holmgren will work to write a response to the senders of the “Mandates Violate the Constitution and Basic Human Rights” emails.

Discussion on meeting in person re: new COVID variants on the rise: Director Dougwillo noted that the open meeting laws say that we have to have meetings in person starting in September per MA general law.

Director Dougwillo will check to see if we can continue to meet via Zoom.

Our next meeting is Monday, September 20 at 5:30 via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Kimberley