

**Brookline Commission for Women
Community Support Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 3, 2021 – 12:00 PM**

Present: Hadassah Margolis, Homa Sarabi, Carol Caro, Felina Silver Robinson

A quorum being present, Commissioner Margolis called the meeting to order at 12:03pm. First, Commissioners voted to approve the minutes of April meeting and reviewed the calendar for next month's meetings through June 2021.

Discussed possible June virtual event and decided that we don't need to hold it, as people are vaccinated and want to be outside, and are overwhelmed with zoom options. So this subcommittee will not hold this event.

Commissioner Margolis spoke with Chair Stone about the role and purpose of this subcommittee, relating to the visibility and advocacy work the BCW now needs or wants. There is some confusion about the word "support"—whether that means direct service to women and girls in Brookline or whether it means being an amplifier/connector to current services. Is this subcommittee's purpose to show the holes (either in knowledge, policy, or services), let others know about these holes, and then be detectives to figure out who can fill those holes (either with studies, services, or events)? Or, is the subcommittee creating those hands-on services, events, studies ourselves? If we do more hands-on service work, how do we know what we can realistically take on? Is "support" even the most accurate word? Is it direct support or support on behalf of women and girls? What does this subcommittee prefer, and does it align with the mission?

Commissioner Caro stated that this may be more of "investigating" rather than "supporting"—there seems to be a need, can your department/organization help out? So BCW is not to be the resource to problem-solve, but to bring the issue to the forefront and find the office/agency/individual to talk to about it. Commissioners Silver Robinson and Sarabi agrees that this is where we are heading. Commissioner Sarabi asked if we have an established system to find these holes? Every month do we focus on something in particular or is it just something that we're interested in? Commissioner Caro said that we need to pinpoint specifics about a certain issue (e.g., housing is such a big topic, so we need to hone in on a specific area that we're concerned about). Commissioner Sarabi suggested that either 1) we divide issues up amongst the subcommissioners or 2) we divide it up by calendar and every subcommissioner focuses on one topic every month.

Commissioner Caro used her work with Roger Blood re: housing and eviction as a concrete example to think about this question. HAB has been engaged in this for a limited extent, but we don't know if it was a one-time effort during COVID isn't clear. Commissioner Margolis asked what would be the subcommittee's next step? Commissioner Caro said that we need

documentation about whether women are being evicted or if this is theoretical, and she would be happy to pursue Virginia Bullock and Michael Alperin at BHA to see if this is an issue.

Commissioner Margolis suggested created a living google doc that lists all of the Town departments, commissions, committees, agencies, non-profits, and individuals who a) should know about the BCW (that we exist), b) can serve as point people if we notice a hole, and c) we can offer our services to amplify and connect partners.

Commissioner Sarabi suggested using housing as a good example to start with in the google doc, in terms of connecting people and addressing women-specific concerns. Commissioner Caro suggested to invite Virginia Bullock to subcommittee meeting.

Commissioner Silver Robinson will create a google doc to start creating a central investigation directory and each subcommissioner will fill in with information we each have.

Part of this directory will also be a list of recipients of an introductory letter to introduce the BCW and (re)introduce ourselves as amplifiers and connectors. Commissioner Sarabi will attempt a draft letter. We all can do some sleuthing and add to the list of individuals, orgs, departments.

No other updates from Women Thriving, as they are meeting tomorrow night. Brookline for Everyone is open to our amplification and collaboration.

No new business.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm, as commissioners had to go to other meetings.