



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
***HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT***

**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**November 12, 2020**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting**

**Present:** Nancy Salamoun, Staff Liaison, Mgr. of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Lara Versari, Commissioner  
Michael Henson, Commissioner

**Guests:** Sgt. Michael Perrone, Somerville Police Department

**Public:**

Amy Henson  
Christopher Spicer Hankle  
Sidd Pattanayak  
Michael He  
Steven Flynn  
Tim  
Larry Rich  
Max Eidelman

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Meeting commenced on October 8, 2020 at 6:35pm.

### **Presentation:**

Sargent Michael Perrone from the Somerville Police Department was present to discuss recent hate incidents at Noor Restaurant. Sgt. Perrone is a criminal detective bureau.

Recent hate incidents directed at Noor Restaurant stem from conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Restaurant received a couple of calls saying “death to Armenians” as well as disparaging comments and yelp reviews.

An Officer who was familiar with the owner was assigned the investigation. The police department focused on protecting patrons and employees of the restaurant. A patrol officer was assigned to the restaurant which was well received by the business. There have been not further threats to the restaurant and the officer routinely checks in with the restaurant. The restaurant asked for an extension of the patrol and it has been granted. These are granted two weeks at a time.

Attendees asked about the causes of this recent instance. It appears that it is specifically linked to the regional conflict.

Attendees asked about trends in hate instances. We saw a slight increase around the election.

Members recommended having a space on the Department’s page to make a complaint or submit an anonymous tip. The Department will follow up with the Commission on this recommendation. Sgt. Perrone stated that the Department investigates hate incidents and hate crimes and report them up to the AG’s office and that even If it doesn’t meet a hate crime, it will still be investigated.

Attendees expressed an interest in holding a follow-up to the hate crime forum and this conversation. Sgt. Perrone is interested in continuing this conversation.

## **Membership Discussion/ Next Steps Planning**

Attendees discussed the upcoming Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Event. The theme for the event will be Reflecting History. The event will be held virtually and be pre-recorded.

The Attendees and Commissioners discussed prompts and questions for both students and participants. Two prompts were discussed with the potential to add more.

1. If you have participated in recent demonstrations or actions, how (or you can say “in what ways”) has your experience of a social movement led you to identify with the example of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?
2. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday is two days before the inauguration of a new President. What advice do you think Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would give to our new President and Americans as a whole about the issues we currently face in today’s world?

Participation can be in narrative form, essay, video or other creative virtual formats to address these questions. Commissioners will report back on outreach at the next meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:00pm**