



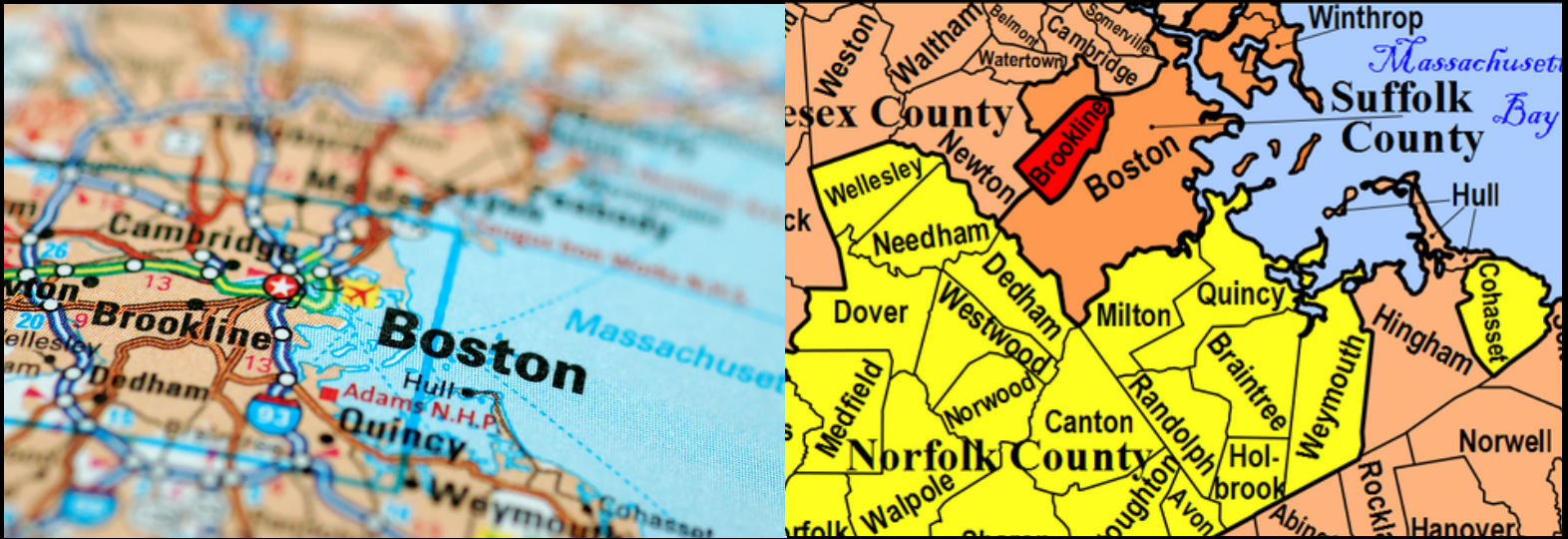
BNBN: BREAKING NEWS

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AUGUST 2023

EDITION #10

TOWN LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION



The Town of Brookline has Launched an investigation into ARPA recipients:

The Brookline Town Administrator has announced that the Town will be launching an investigation into the non-profit organization, Black N Brown Club, also known as BNBC due to allegations of discrimination. This shocking news was delivered at the July 25, 2023 Select Board meeting but we have heard few updates since.

Depending on the outcome of this investigation, the million dollar grant awarded to BNBC, to establish an affordable childcare program to Brookline, may not come to fruition. This would be devastating to all of the low income mothers that have been anticipating finally being able to use their childcare vouchers without having the extra burden of wasting time and money traveling out of town to find a voucher accepting facility.

The ramifications of this investigation will certainly impact the next generation of Black and Brown children in the Town of Brookline seeing that most Black and Brown parents are in need of affordable childcare with the majority of these communities being of low or very low income. Will these children be able to play and grow amongst their Brookline peers? Or will they have to endure long commutes every day to spend hours amongst strangers in Boston? These are just a few of the questions that have been raised by concerned residents.

Black N Brown News will be continuing to stay up to date on how this story develops and encourages residents to email us with their thoughts at info@blacknbrownnews.com.



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MULTIPLE TURNOVERS SIGNAL TROUBLE FOR BPS



The Status of Boston Public Schools:

Numerous investigations have been launched into the Boston Public School System after several years of complaints from predominantly Black and Brown staff members. These staff members allege that administrators of color, particularly those that were advocating for equity and Black and Brown students have been systematically pushed out with the use of frivolous investigations, being placed on administrative leave, as well as other means.

These concerns were so commonplace that 15 former employees, that recently left BPS due to these intimidation and hostility tactics, wrote a letter detailing these concerns on August 24th, 2022. When asked about the investigation process, one former administrator (that was found innocent of all wrongdoings) stated that during the 6 month long investigation, many of her peers that were interviewed felt pressured to speak negatively about her. She also shared that despite being found innocent, the ramifications of the investigation, and how it was carried out, lead to her feeling that her reputation had suffered so much that she felt the need to quit.

While a BPS representative stated that this matter is still under investigation, a number of concerns regarding a fair investigation remain. In particular, the lawyer tasked with reaching out to relevant parties has not contacted any of the 3 impacted administrators. Our children deserve better, and our educators of color deserve better. BNBN will continue to stay up to date on this story and thanks the Bay State Banner for its investigative work on this subject.



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NO DEMOCRACY IN BROOKLINE

Brookline Town Model: Conspire When You Can't Compete:

The Town of Brookline is known both for a racist scandal that resulted in the Town having to pay Gerald Alston \$11M, and for trying their darnedest to portray themselves as a progressive, guilt free, utopia. While some may believe what the Town PR themselves as on the surface, all of the reinforced structural inequality is lurking just below. This insidious pattern of hiding behind "woke" values while perpetuating systems of harm and exploitation, is the foundation of the Town of Brookline. And present day residents honor this tradition in a number of ways.

Some join local politics and attack any effort that will increase the self sufficiency and socioeconomic mobility of the Black and Brown community. They use their government email servers to kill Warrant Articles before they are ever heard at Annual Town Meeting (where each Warrant Article is debated for merits, proponents from each side make a case, and then each WA is voted on). Brookline Elected Officials use this public, government server, to communicate with other Elected Town Officials to bully and attempt to pick apart the personal lives of Black and Brown community leaders rather than focus on the merits of the only Warrant Article with over 100 signatures of support. Instead, they spend their terms as Elected Officials voting against the will of the majority of the Black and Brown community that they claim to be up-lifting. The time that they promised to use to listen and advocate for Black and Brown communities is instead used to create conspiracies and even peddle outright lies knowingly with little regard for the ramifications.

Even when backed into a corner, they find a way to wriggle out. The petitioners of WA19 modeled the language very closely to that of the Women's Commission per hearings of WA19 with Advisory, CTOS, and the Select Board. This near identical Warrant Article simply creates a foundation to advocate for Black and Brown communities the same way women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups do through these bodies. These officials still debated the scope of the WA when it came to WA19 despite the fact that the Women's Commission has existed for decades upon decades with the same scope. The work of the petitioners showed that unless there is bias against wanting equal treatment and opportunity for Black and Brown people in Brookline, there was no reason to not support WA19. Therefore, the Advisory Committee voted unanimously in favor of WA19. Yet, a second meeting was called where WA19 was voted on again. The topic of discussion? This newsletter.



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Yet some decided that this newsletter was the perfect opportunity to try to change the vote before Annual Town Meeting. Absolutely nothing changed between the first Advisory Committee vote and the second. The same Warrant Article, that the petitioners had collaborated with Town Counsel, Advisory, Town Moderator, and many others to ensure the language was within scope was presented again. The BNBN Newsletter, edition #8 (May), on page 3, in the last paragraph even conveys a heartfelt thank you from the petitioners to those listed above and others that assisted in creating WA19. While the result of the second vote was still in support of WA19, the intent of this move has not been missed. She and other white "allies" in Brookline governance believe that they have the right to not only police Black people's language, rip away the rights of petitioners (as shown on page 3, in emails from Town Meeting Member Bonnie Bastien in the TMM server), and deny the Black and Brown residents of this community a commission to protect them and their communities the same way every other community does. The hypocrisy is not only palatable, it is undeniable.

This is no different than thousands of other tactics used to delegitimize and destabilize movement efforts in Black and Brown communities. The common thread among all of these efforts is either a willing and knowing participation in maintaining the racist social order and destroying any effort to change the status quo, or seemingly ignorant compliance from those that refuse to look at the evidence that challenges their beliefs, that they "earned" everything they have today without any benefit from institutional privilege and freedom from consistent oppression. In a blissfully ignorant, frenzy, many chose to fight to keep what makes them uncomfortable in the shadows, rather than confront difficult emotions and do the work to be better and make this Town a more equitable home for all. After all, what is the use of Annual Town Meeting if the fate of Warrant Articles is already decided before?



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How did Bonnie Bastien “know” that BNBC members would be on the Commission 6 days before it was even voted on at Annual Town Meeting?? In fact, two of the petitioners even selflessly vowed to never serve on the Commission after they were personally targeted as a means of delegitimizing WA19. What makes Bonnie and all the other Town Meeting Members, above the rules of the law clearly laid out by Town Counsel? None of the petitioners are or were affiliated with BNBN. Yet, these blatant attacks on BNBN’s first amendment rights, the rights of the petitioners, and even the rights to fair governance of the Black and Brown residents of Brookline, have decidedly been dashed because Bonnie and other Elected Town Officials want to attack young local leaders and make them responsible for words that they did not write. These are our words, we have claimed our work publicly at Select Board Meetings, and clarified all of this on more than one occasion. This was an intentional and malicious spreading of misinformation to influence public opinion and sway votes away from WA19. These bad actors succeeded. They succeeded at showing the dark underbelly that truly controls Brookline politics. I hope it was worth it.

From: **Bonnie Bastien** <bonniebastien@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, May 25, 2023, 7:57 PM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Article 19 Debate - Black N Brown Commission
To:
Cc: TMMa List Serve <brooklinetmma@groups.io>

With all due respect, Madam Moderator, you certainly do have a lot of power to wield in what is and isn't in scope in the work we do here or what is and is not granted permission to be submitted late, etc. etc. But I will be drawing a line at you dictating what is and what isn't permissible to consider or what is relevant to a piece of legislation. This is not a court of law that you are presiding over.

That newsletter caused enormous harm, used racial epithets, spread falsehoods and personal information of many folks on this listserve, and is only the latest in a long line of harassment and abuse that many Black and brown leaders and others have taken from the BNBC.

Considering that if the Black and Brown Commission could possibly have a member of the Black and Brown Club appointed to it, I think the newsletter is quite relevant. But that is not for me to decide. Folks can make decisions on what they feel is and isn't relevant in this process, but you stepping in to dictate that is, in my personal opinion, a step too far.

Respectfully,
Bonnie Bastien TMM5



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At the end of the day, Warrant Article 19 was supported by the majority of the Black and Brown community. The petitioners engaged residents and conducted above and beyond outreach to gain input and garner support. Black and Brown people showed up in higher numbers to Town Meetings and increased civic engagement with several young leaders taking time to make public statements of support and express how much they know the proposed Black and Brown Commission would positively impact their families. And it was liberal white Brookline residents that decided to stick their neck out of their lane and into the business of Black and Brown people to prevent this commission from coming to fruition. WHITE people, attacked a commission for Black and Brown people by claiming that Black people are being racist to one another.

White people decided to attribute our newsletter that we, BNBN, put hours and hours of research and time into, to an individual that has no association with us. We are aware that our content may be shocking to some. It is a testament to the brainwashing in this country that the truth is so alarming that it is seen as an attack that must be stopped. But to use our words to attack this and other petitioners of Warrant Article 19 is an olympic worthy stretch and clear evidence of the floundering to find a way to discredit leaders that the community knows are credible. These white liberals didn't stop at attacking these young, civically engaged, residents. They went as far as attacking the only 100% Black owned non-profit organization in the Town. If you are confused how these entities are related or in any way relevant, you are not alone.

These elected officials that run on claims of equality, advocacy, and "doing the work" to be better allies. Yet once elected they only uplift the needs of their own communities at the expense of ours and play 6 degrees of separation amongst themselves to try to connect every entity they deem as a threat to the status quo in what they thought would be one fatal swoop. And they will fail because as said in the Merchant of Venice "truth will out". If there was any doubt that these are intentional efforts to spread misinformation, look no further than to the May 31st select board meeting where we, BNBN, showed up and stated live, on public record, stated that none of the individuals being targeted have any affiliation to BNBN or anything to do with our newsletter. Yet, later that same day at Annual Town Meeting to this very day, these lies are still being perpetuated to influence public opinion and delegitimize the work of community leaders that still fight on despite the attacks from the officials of the Town they live in and are trying to improve. Brookline may act like it is far cry from the rhetoric of "go back to your own country if you don't like it here!" but the message couldn't be more clear.



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These efforts are not only found within elected official circles, but every facet of the Town, especially the "non-profit" sector that raises millions yearly and supposedly spends this money every year in efforts to help our communities. But the results always are the same, they line their pockets and we are left with next to nothing. The small crumbs we do get are only those master allows us so they can satisfy their diversity requirements to be able to continue receiving this funding. Brookline Food Pantry has already been featured in previous BNBN newsletters. Let us shed light on a few other notable examples:

The only Black Brookline ARPA Review Committee Member, Arthur Conquest, accused Deborah Brown, of Brookline Improvement Coalition (BIC) of misuse of \$750K approved ARPA Funds. Per documented communications between the Committee Member and Deborah Brown, the funds were supposed to be used to hire Black and Brown contractors. And these funds, nor any others were used to uphold this deal. We reached out to Deborah Brown and asked for clarification and did not receive any response. Therefore, we will proceed with the information we have gathered despite Deborah's lack of interest in clearing up any misconceptions. Furthermore, our team was unable to find any record of BIC programs, despite their ARPA application stating that funding was to be used to "maintain and expand BIC operations and programs". Who do these programs assist? We could not find one singular Black or Brown person that had ever heard of such a programs during our investigation.

On the day eight months ago that the ARPA Committee was making the final cut(s) for funding, things became a bit confusing and your organization, BIC, was left off the list. You called Chez Conquest and said to me something like "Don't forget BIC." I responded to you not realizing that I hadn't turned my mute bottom off and everyone present could hear the short exchange between us.

Five minutes following that meeting you and I spoke again, by phone, and I made it cement clear that "\$250,000.00" of the "\$750,000.00" being awarded to BIC would go towards Black N Brown contractors. Legal or not, that specifically was the deal I signed up for. Again, that was 8 months ago.

Ade was on that Zoom and overheard, like everyone else, the phone call you made to me during that ARPA meeting. During the conversation I had with him after that meeting I told him about the "\$250,000" I sweetened your BIC ARPA grant with. Since then he and I have had numerous discussions about the Black N Brown contractors and opening the door for them to bid and work on (construction) projects that would open up as a result of the extra "\$250,000" ARPA award BIC had received. Specifically, you mentioned to me about the "roofing contract".

Up until yesterday the discussions circulated just between you, Ade and I, and it only covered bits and pieces, and hit and misses. But then, yesterday, it spilled over to other players -- the four Black contractors who attended the Disadvantaged Business Conference you organized. MY HONOR IS AT STAKE, NOW. I don't play Uncle Ben, Uncle Sam, Uncle Tom for no one. That is not my way under any circumstance. Death before dishonor is my motto, which roots go back to The 'Hood -- as in, the legacy of my Home Boys, which I dearly honor and respect!

STRAIGHTEN THIS NONSENSE OUT AND DO IT REAL DAMN, *\$^%\$#@! QUICK.



THE CROWN ACT

Effects of Inclusive Legislation

On July 26, 2022, "An Act Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Natural and Protective Hairstyles," was signed into law by Governor Charlie Baker. This law, commonly known as the CROWN Act, is a historic and affirming piece of legislation that has already created change. Over past few years, many incidents of discrimination, predominantly against Black children, have gained national attention. There was the December 19, 2019 incident where Official Maloney for the Buena-Oakcrest wrestling dual, instructed High School student, Andrew Johnson, to cut his locs or forfeit his match. The Black youth was then seen on video having his locs cut with scissors.

Closer to home, there was the incident on October, 24th, 2022 in Massachusetts, where a 15 year old Black girl was disciplined for wearing braid extensions (often done as a protective hairstyle) because it was a "banned style". The fact that the school had banned a hairstyle specifically used by Black people for centuries to protect and maintain their hair is racist in and of itself. Yet, an analysis of the full dress code further proved this point, as similar bans were not made for hairstyles predominantly used by other races.

Incidents like this have been traumatizing Black and Brown youth for decades, in institutions of education as well as Black and Brown adults in the workplace and professional spheres. These incidents shed light on just how destructive these discriminatory policies are and how often they are enforced.

Since the CROWN Act, we have seen a massive resurgence of Black hairstyles, both among youths as well as Black Boston News anchors! Read more about some of their stories shared in the article "Boston Black news anchors' natural hair a show of cultural pride" via The Bay State Banner.

