

Somerville April 17, 2024

To the Somerville Human Rights Commission

Dear Latoya

My name is Jenny Bonham-Carter, I'd like to express my interest in being involved with the Somerville Human Rights Commission.

I [REDACTED] and worked

at the time in biotech which was the reason for us to move here, apart from the fact that we were keen to have a new adventure.

We constantly talk about what great luck we've had to settle down in this lovely, buzzing town! [REDACTED] and before I knew it I was part of the PTA. We rapidly came to love and get involved with the community: Somerville Homeless Coalition, Somerville Foundation, Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) and Somerville Community Baptist Church where I'm an active member. I've introduced the church to the Poor People's Campaign to whom we're now a partner, and to CREW through whom we're in the beginning stages of being a Climate Resilience hub.

My background is social work, I got my degree in Sweden and worked in residential care, mental health, elementary school, for a Swedish development aid NGO in Burkina Faso West Africa, social services children and families department in England and Sweden.

When our two older children were small I decided to study again and enrolled in the Human Rights masters program at Uppsala University north of Stockholm. I was interested in getting into politics but ended up in interfaith work, with an interfaith youth project in Stockholm operating out of a renowned youth center there. Multiculturalism has always been a favorite area of interest for me (it was my focus during the social work studies) and this just added a new dimension that I fell in love with. So when it was time for us to move to the US, where I'd be mostly running the show at home with the children while my husband had the salaried job, I knew I wanted to get involved with and volunteer for interfaith initiatives over here.

Through a friend at the Somerville Homeless Coalition I found out about the interfaith organization Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries (CMM). I got involved in the program committee, the board and eventually became vice chair. Parallel with this I heard about The Poor People's Campaign – A National Call for Moral Revival and was very attracted to this umbrella movement fighting the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, systemic poverty, the war economy and ecological devastation along with the false narrative of religious nationalism. Since over two years I run the music and art for the Massachusetts chapter of the Poor People's Campaign.

I quit my work with CMM in 2020 to make space for another organization close to my heart, Healing Empathy Redemption Oasis (H.E.R.O. Nurturing Center) that conducts Nature Healing Walks and lobby for the possibility for doctors to prescribe time in nature as has been done in other countries. For the last 3 years I've also been volunteering with DeNovo, an

organization that gives legal aid to asylum seekers. I do intake and deep interviews for affidavits. My fluency in French has been a useful asset in this work (I used to live in France and Burkina Faso is a Francophone country).

Since Sept 2016 I'm the music teacher at the Swedish school that meets once a week in Weston. For the last two years I've also taken care of the preschoolers there. Music is a big part of my life, I've always been singing and playing and went to music school as a child and teenager. I have a Somerville/Cambridge based band, West of Willow, who plays in various venues and a monthly residency at Redbones, Davis Square. Another vocal group I run is What the World Needs Now – Interfaith Coalition Singers. Through playing at various social justice, peace and climate rallies and events over the years, and through the jamsessions that I run at my house I've really seen how music, and art in general, is such a wonderful togetherness making and resilience building tool. Much needed in these times.

Thank you, I'm hoping to speak soon.

All the best,

Jenny Bonham-Carter

Email: 