

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for April 26, 2018

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Kristen Cooper, Secretary
Marlene Robinson
Judith Smith Wilkinson
Jacob Powers
Karen Kunz
Tim Hariston (Liaison with State HRC)
Don Spencer (Program Assistant)
Kristen Jones (Volunteer)

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:32 PM.

The agenda was distributed. No additions were requested.

Members of the commission introduced themselves to the two new people attending the meeting. Kristen Jones is a volunteer to the commission and is a new resident to Morgantown who is looking to get involved with the city's functioning. A newly appointed commissioner, Karen Kunz, works at WVU teaching in the Public Administration Department. She has lived in Morgantown for over 10 years and is on the board of the ACLU. Another new commissioner, Drew Bucy, was unable to attend the meeting. It was acknowledged that Jacob Powers is now a commissioner with voting privileges.

Public Session:

No one from the public was in attendance for the meeting.

Minutes:

The minutes for March 2018 were distributed and reviewed. A few minor revisions were noted. Marlene Robinson moved that the minutes be accepted as written. The motion was seconded by Karen Kunz, and the motion passed unanimously.

Communications:

Jan Derry distributed orientation packets to the two new attendees. She briefly went over the contents which included ordinances, operating procedures, annual calendar, annual report, and community needs assessment results. Karen Kunz asked if there were any plans to do a follow-up needs assessment. Jan Derry commented that a follow-up is not on the current agenda because of other priorities.

Jacob Powers reported that he has taken a new job with WVU in the Intensive English Program. Don Spencer commented that Jacob's new position might be advantageous for the Sister City program that recognizes foreign students.

Regarding social media, Jan announced that Jacob would be taking over the commission's Facebook page. Karen Kunz asked if we have a Twitter account and volunteered to tag the commission in any related postings made by the graduate students in her program.

There have been no emails received on the commission's email account. Jan suggested that Marlene send a test email to make sure it is working properly. There have been no messages on the commission's phone line.

Don Spencer discussed the WVU Law School's Innocence Project presentation that took place recently. It was given by a person from Cleveland who was wrongfully incarcerated for several years and how it changed his life. The Innocence Project works with other who have been incarcerated and helps them reestablish their lives. Don suggested that the commission needs to work with this organization and recommended we ask the director to come to one of our meetings.

Tim Hairston from the State Human Rights Commission gave a brief history of the Commission. He mentioned that they have very limited investigators for HUD and EEOC violations. However, there is a chance of losing a multi-million dollar block grant which has gotten the attention of the legislature. Currently they have 8 commissioners and have had a great deal of turnover in executive directors. Their most recent executive director was dismissed for lack of a college degree even though she has been serving in the position since 2013.

The Fair Housing poster contest at Morgantown High School is at the point of being submitted to the judges. Kristen Cooper and Marlene Robinson will be judging on behalf of the commission as soon as they receive direction from the city.

In response to the commission's budget request, the commission has been awarded a budget of \$5,200. Much of this will go towards a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion trainer. A request was made for someone to serve as a volunteer treasurer for the commission, and Karen Kunz offered to take on that responsibility. Jan Derry will send her our budget request so Karen can see the line items and the budget amounts assigned to each.

Priority Items:

The City Attorney was unable to attend this commission meeting but send an Investigatory Process and Procedure document for the Commission to use to address complaints that involve the recent Human Rights Ordinance in the city. A copy of the document was given to everyone at the meeting. Jan Derry

asked that everyone review the document and be prepared to discuss it and make changes at the May meeting. The City Attorney will be invited to that meeting.

In regards to the MEI Evaluation, Don Spencer explained the process we went through last year. This year's form will be due at the end of July. He proposed that the subcommittee meet at the beginning of June to make the necessary report. Kristen Cooper will serve with Don on the subcommittee and Kristen Jones volunteered to work on the project as well. The June meeting will be set at the next commission meeting in May.

Don Spencer distributed the DEI plan with the revisions to date. We still need to complete the footnotes and appendices. It was requested that one of Karen Kunz's graduate students work on gathering the demographic information for the appendix. We are looking to submit the DEI plan by September and we will need to work through several layers of city management to get to the approval stage.

Progress Reports:

Don Spencer reported that he attended the Housing Fair on behalf of the commission. There was a moderate crowd at the event and he received a few questions from attendees, however there was not a lot of interest in the commission at this particular event. There was some confusion among attendees regarding which agency could address their needs. Jan Derry mentioned that the Housing Fair may be combined with the "Meet Your Neighbor" event in the future.

The group reviewed the Legislative Docket and the resolutions and ordinances that passed last year. There are several issues on the docket for this year which includes Inclusionary Zoning. This issue is being supported by Ron Delaney who wants to get more affordable and accessible housing in Morgantown. Incentives for Universal Design is moving slowly because the building fees are already quite low so there is not a lot of room for an incentive. The Indigenous People's Day is being shelved for the time being because we do not have much support from the Native American people in the city. The Resolution on Gun Violence was mentioned and it was reported that there needs to be some output and support for a legislative bill. This issue will be readdressed in December or January. The establishment of a Morgantown Housing Authority is still being discussed. Currently the combined Fairmont/Morgantown Housing Authority does not feel there is a need for representation in Morgantown. The Legislative Docket also includes the DEI plan that was discussed earlier.

New Business:

Although the Commission's website does not appear to be very current, it was decided to take this issue off of the agenda for future meetings. It was, however, suggested that we invite Andrew Stacy to attend one of our meetings to give us an overview of the site and other communications issues.

Announcements

The Human Rights calendar will be distributed to the new commission members at the next meeting.
The next meeting is scheduled for May 17th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper