

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for May 17, 2018

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

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:34 PM.

Members of the commission introduced themselves to the two new people attending the meeting. Drew Bucy was in attendance for her first meeting as a commissioner. Jan Derry gave Drew an orientation packet and explained the contents.

The agenda was distributed. Jan Derry added commissioners' terms to the Communications section. Jan also announced that she included the commission's budget in the packet that each person received. Judith Wilkinson requested that the Interfaith Group's meeting be added to Communications section.

Pubic Session:

Ramsey Kilsella was in attendance as a citizen interested in getting involved with human rights.

Minutes:

The minutes for April 2018 were distributed and reviewed. Marlene Robinson moved that the minutes be accepted as written. The motion was seconded by Jacob Powers, and the motion passed unanimously.

Communications:

Judith Wilkinson reported that the Interfaith Association of Greater Morgantown held a meeting this evening to pray for events in Israel. Judith discussed her experience when she visited Israel. In general, the group discussed ways to strengthen the peace movement but acknowledged that there are obstacles in both the US and Israel. It was noted that the Interfaith Association is moving the people of Morgantown a few steps ahead in this process.

Jan Derry reported that her agency NWVCIL will no longer be a fair housing enforcement agency which is a great loss to the community. It will now be up to the Human Rights Commission to do all enforcement. There will only be a state fair housing agency in WV located in Charleston.

Regarding social media, Jan Derry announced that she received one email but in pursuing the issue she discovered that the complainant was not a Morgantown resident (nor a resident of WV). Jacob Powers reported that there was no activity on the commission's Facebook page.

Tim Hairston from the State Human Rights Commission had nothing new to report, but gave a brief recap of the information he shared at the April meeting. He did note that the General Council for the state commission is now the acting Executive Director. The situation with the state commission brought up the fact that voting (or not voting) has consequences especially when it comes to the level of civil rights and human rights.

The Fair Housing poster contest at Morgantown High School, voting was conducted and winners were selected. Kristen Cooper and Marlene Robinson gave a description of the winning poster and explained the judging process. The winners will be given awards on Monday, May 21st in the City Council chambers. Jan Derry volunteered to attend if no one else is available.

Jan Derry reported on the expiration of commissioners' terms. Jacob Powers' term expires in June but he can be reappointed by the City Council. Marlene Robinson's term is expiring in June. Marlene expressed interest in continuing to serve on the commission. There is one slot that is open. Don Spencer suggested we contact Megan Smith from CCSJ and will try to contact her about applying. Ramsey Kilsella also plans to apply.

Priority Items:

Regarding the Human Rights Complaint Procedure – the City Attorney is planning to attend the commission's meeting in June. Prior to that meeting it was agreed that we should study the document so we can give suggestions and feedback. Jacob Powers suggested we form a subcommittee to review the document. Jan Derry committed to join the subcommittee with Jacob and invited others to come to a meeting on Thursday, May 24th at 5:30 pm at Jan's office.

The MEI subcommittee will meet on June 7th at 5:30 to work on the index/report.

Progress Reports:

The latest version of the Diversity Equity Inclusion plan was distributed. Don Spencer discussed some of the changes as well as areas that will require more research. The City Hall planning office needs to work on the census data. Jacob Powers and Ramsey Kilsella volunteered to work on charts for one of the appendices. It was suggested that they call Chris Fletcher for help with that. Appendix B needs to be reviewed by the city clerk. We reviewed Appendix E (a cultural proficiency continuum) and Appendix F

(a harassment statement). Don suggested that the commission needs to work toward determining what ordinances will need to be instituted so the DEI plan can happen. A discussion on the best way to move forward took place and it was decided that the best course of action would be a meeting with the City Manager to get his sign-off on the project and direct his staff to work on the necessary elements. Jan Derry will schedule an appointment with the City Manager in a couple of weeks.

New Business:

An updated Human Rights calendar was distributed.

Marlene Robinson discussed the Human Rights Award program that takes place in December. She suggested that the new commissioners and volunteers look for people to nominate for the awards. Don Spencer suggested we institute a third award to be given to a politician or public servant.

Announcements

The next meeting is scheduled for June 21st.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper