

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for July 19, 2018

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Kristen Cooper, Secretary
Marlene Robinson, Vice Chair
Jacob Powers
Judith Wilkinson
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.

The agenda was distributed. Jan Derry added Fair Housing Training to the agenda – stating that mandatory training has been funded.

Pubic Session:

No one from the public was in attendance.

Minutes:

The minutes for June 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:

There were no Commissioner updates.

Jacob Powers reported that there were no messages to the phone line or email. He noted that people have been visiting the Facebook page.

Tim Hairston from the State Human Rights Commission spoke about the 15th year of Human Rights Day taking place August 2nd. The Commission will be giving a special award to Mary Kay Jaquah. The event will take place at the Beni Kedem Center in Charleston.

Don Spencer distributed an article entitled “Coming Soon to Your Town” about hate groups that are growing in numbers in communities in the US. The article made clear that hate groups can come to any

community including one like Morgantown. As a city we need to learn how to handle such an occurrence and recognize our responsibility.

Susan Buchannon from the Department of Justice Community Relations Service met with a group of Commissioners and Commission Volunteers and spoke about the prevention of hate crimes. Susan is a conciliation specialist and she is looking to create ways to prevent hate group action across the country. She would like to work with the Commission to organize a Hate Group Prevention Forum in Morgantown before September 3rd. Marlene Robinson agreed to partner with other city organizations to promote the Forum once a date is established.

Priority Items:

The Human Rights Complaint Procedure as well as the Investigatory Process & Procedures was discussed. The Commission reviewed a copy of both documents submitted to us by the City Attorney. At Don Spencer's request there was a discussion about the lack of "next steps" after a discrimination has occurred, but the Commission agreed that the recourse for complainants is to take their issue to a court that is appropriate for handling a case. Jan Derry stated that she felt the Process and Procedures is ready to be adopted. Marlene Robinson moved to accept the Investigatory Process & Procedures and the Complaint Form. Jacob Powers seconded the motion and there was a unanimous vote to approve. Jan Derry said she will get the documents to the City for posting on the website.

MEI packets containing the completed letters, documents, and attachments were distributed. Don Spencer pointed out that we should gain significant points this year because the City Manager agreed to establish an LGBTQ liaison for the city. There were a few minor revisions noted. After the changes are made the packet will be sent to the Human Rights Campaign for evaluation. This led to a discussion of the "Open to All" campaign that is taking place in Huntington where businesses are posting stickers that denote that the business is respectful to all customers regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. It was recommended that we look into creating a similar campaign in Morgantown. An article about Huntington's program was distributed.

Progress Reports:

The latest version of the Diversity Equity Inclusion plan was distributed. Don Spencer discussed some of the changes. In section 5 there is more specific information about the 30 action items. An employment non-discrimination ordinance was added (1.1). The City Attorney told Jan Derry that they probably have such an ordinance in place and is looking for a copy. If it does not exist we will encourage the City Attorney to write one. Annual Salary Benefits and Bonuses (1.2) was added and includes information on administrative transitions. Face to Face Meetings (7.4) was added. It was suggested that cultural competence be changed to include the word "sensitivity." Also it was recommended that the word "firing" be changed to "terminated." Jacob Powers moved that the Commission accept the DEI Plan as a draft that will be distributed to the city administration for their input. Marlene seconded the motion which was accepted by a unanimous vote.

New Business

Jan Derry and Don Spencer met with Christal Crouso, Frank Scafella, and an attorney from the Housing Authority Board for Fairmont/Morgantown. The meeting took place at their unmarked office in the Seneca Center. They discussed having representation in Morgantown which should include making the public aware that there is a Housing Authority office in Morgantown. Christal Crouso would like to give a presentation on what the Authority has to offer to the Commission. This will be scheduled for the August Commission meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 16th..

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper