

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for August 15, 2019

Present: Kate Levine-Freedman, Vice Chair
Kristen Cooper, Secretary
Jan Derry
Drew Bucy
Don Spencer (Program Assistant)
DeeDee McIntosh (PFLAG Liaison)

Meeting called to order by Kate Levine-Freedman, Vice Chair, at 6:33 P.M.

The agenda was distributed and approved with no changes.

Public Session:

No one from the public was in attendance.

Minutes:

Copies of the July 2019 minutes were distributed. Jan Derry moved that the minutes be approved as written; Drew Bucy seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Communications:

Jan Derry led a discussion about a Hate Crime Prevention forum. This was originally proposed by a representative of the Department of Justice last year. A new representative has taken over the position and contacted Jan Derry about revisiting the forum idea. Initially, the DOJ representative would like to review a copy of the HRC's operating procedures and human rights ordinance. Jan Derry was authorized to share that information with the DOJ. The discussion began with the question of a timeline for presenting the forum. Several questions were brought up such as: What is the timeline? What expenses would be involved? Would it require police participation? Would we need to have a meeting with interested parties prior to presenting the forum? Do we have the manpower to make this happen? It was agreed that Jan Derry would have another discussion with the DOJ to ascertain the HRC's exact responsibilities and the timeline involved.

The social media accounts, email address, and phone line received no messages.

Tim Hairston, representative from the State HRC, was not in attendance but provides the following update by email. "There is nothing major happening to report on. We had to deliberate on our first case

in a while last month and our deliberations took close to an hour and a half. Everyone had their input as I chaired the meeting although the chair was on the phone from Niagara Falls with his wife. All the commissioners were present either in person or by telephone. It was one of the better meetings that we have had in a long time.”

Priority Items:

Spenser Darden from WVU’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division spoke to the commission about the University’s Diversity Week plans. Spenser introduced himself and talked about his role with the university. Diversity Week is scheduled for September 15 – 21. It will include an interfaith celebration, and State of Diversity address, Hispanic heritage event, a black student panel discussion, and a discussion on gender in sports. He also informed the commission that they are working on a mentorship program for men of color. He also agreed to support the commission’s initiatives via his social media resources. The Human Rights Film Festival is in the planning stages, and they are looking to get better attendance and involvement.

Don Spencer reported that the MEI documents were submitted on time via Federal Express. Unfortunately the package was returned to the city and it was damaged. A new set of documents were created and re-submitted, and the status of the evaluation is still to be determined.

The Anti-Bullying initiative has been passed by the City Council and now needs to be implemented and adopted to the city code. The city attorney has been involved in the process. Jan Derry will determine the current status and determine next steps.

The Diversity Equity and Inclusion plan will be going to the City Council but will probably not be voted on until September per the City Attorney. There needs to be some updating of the wording, information additions, and parts need to be changed before it is presented to the City Council at the Meeting of the Whole on September 24th.

New Business:

The Project Status profiles were reviewed. The projects that are labeled as a priority were addressed and the leader for each of those projects gave an update. It was agreed to drop the “Post Town Meeting – Inclusive City Plan” from the project list. The Indigenouness Peoples Day initiative is at a standstill until we can find Native Americans who are interested in promoting it. The city is not ready to deal with the Universal Design Incentive Ordinance and we are looking at alternative ways to make some headway on this project. Don Spencer reported that the Gun Violence Legislation is something that we should bring up again to legislators. Kate Levine-Freeman is working on the New to Morgantown project and Kristen Cooper volunteered to help her with it. Jacob Powers will report on Open to All at the next meeting. For the Minority Liaison Coordinating Council, we will need to give the city a list with contact information so this can move forward. The Minority Liaison will be discussed again at the September meeting.

The city has asked the HRC to do a PSA and other things to promote participation in the census to maintain funding and legislative representation for our area.

The Inclusive City signs need attention – either repaired or replaced. It was recommended that Jacob Powers write a letter to the City Council about this situation.

An “Implicit Bias and Confronting Bigotry Training” program was considered. Reportedly, an ACLU group is coming to Morgantown to do the training if the HRC will sponsor it. Jacob Powers will be attending to the project and find out what sponsorship entails (e.g., funds, support).

Ongoing Projects:

The revised Complaint Form Process sheets were reviewed. Jan Derry moved that the sheets be accepted and posted on the HRC website. The motion was seconded by Drew Bucy, and it was approved unanimously.

It was agreed that the Legislative Docket be reviewed in September of October.

Looking Ahead: HRC Annual Calendar

In September the commission will begin working on the Human Rights Awards for 2019.

November 20th was added to the calendar as the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Announcements:

The next meeting of the Human Rights Commission will take place on September 19, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper