

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for August 16, 2018

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Jacob Powers
Karen Kunz
Drew Bucy
Kate Levine-Freedman
Tim Hariston (Liaison with State HRC)
Don Spencer (Program Assistant)
Judith Wilkinson (Volunteer)

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:30 PM.

The agenda was distributed.

Pubic Session:

Two guests from the Fairmont-Morgantown Housing Authority were present: Christal Crouso, Executive Director and Brian MacCalaster, a board member of the Housing Authority (and an attorney at Bailey and Glasser).

Jan Derry got together with Brian and Christal to talk about housing in Morgantown and express our concerns about lack of local, Morgantown-Fairmont Housing Authority presence in Morgantown. There is a small office in Seneca Center (shared space with Sunnyside Up and Land Stewardship), but main office is in Fairmont. The Morgantown office is used as satellite and is not manned full time. It was requested that the Human Rights Commission to be made fully aware of services that can be provided by housing authority. The main goal being to make the Authority more visible to residents of Morgantown with housing needs.

A presentation from was made by Brian and Christal:

Christal is new to the role of Executive Director and is looking forward to a great partnership with the Commission. She wants to provide a broader understanding of everything they do:

- Housing Choice Voucher Program – more than 50% of allocation is Mon County. All money comes from HUD
- Seneca Village – project-based vouchers and the voucher is tied to unit. 9 vouchers will go to low-income seniors there. Go online in September.

- Home Ownership Center in Morgantown – counseling and education for families looking to buy a home; counselor sees clients in Morgantown – put on plans to become mortgage-ready. 25% funding from HUD, remainder is fundraising.
- New Home Program – 0% interest mortgage (program up at end of September)
- Provide post-purchase education – green living, safety, construction, etc.
- Owner-Occupied Rehab through several programs – forgivable loan / grant if family stays in home for 5 years (accessibility, roofs, windows, siding, etc.) – mostly an older population but not always. Exclusively low-income families.
- Employment down-payment programs to WVU employees and city of employment – forgivable loan. Must have deed restriction on property. No income restrictions. (Premise is to get people who work at WVU to be able to afford to live in Morgantown). Employer donates funds and housing authority manages it from there.
- Morgantown Homecoming Program – try to expand home ownership in certain neighborhoods – near campus neighborhoods such as Greenmont, First Ward and Woodburn. Buy big rental units and convert back into single family homes. Have done about 31 of those. Those are sold to anyone – not income restricted. Roll over funds – as they sell home they convert another one. There are deed restrictions that say that as long as the housing authority exists, they have to remain owner-occupied.
- Did have a Veteran’s program – funding has dried up.
- Doing a public-private partnership – 4 houses in Woodburn

There is a staff of 20 people + construction crew.

Jan asked question about land-bank policy being developed. Housing Authority is not the entity, but will be a good tool for city to use.

They are working on community education process.

Lack of resources is a real challenge. Think about community partners who can support the work. Habitat, CHAP, etc.

Don Spencer’s suggestion: proposal to city council educating them as to issues (exposure, safety, affordability, etc.)

Brian recommended a focused approach that highlights a specific issue or demographic (accessibility, veterans, etc.) to create some process and momentum. Or, Jan recommended a focus on access for all who need those resources.

Minutes:

The minutes for July 2018 were distributed and reviewed. One correction was suggested to the name of Mary Kay Jaquet.. Jacob Powers moved that the minutes be accepted with correction. The motion was seconded by Karen Kunz, and the motion passed unanimously.

Communications:

Commissioner Updates included the following:

Karen Kunz discussed the development of state bank – commercial entity. To provide funding for agricultural development, community development, hemp and medical marijuana growers can deposit funds because no federal affiliation. Just beginning work in conjunction with some at WVU, city, and beyond. Goal: to write rules and legislation together to submit for consideration. Looking for community and institutional partnerships.

Jacob Powers reported that the Commission got a lot of views for event on Facebook for meeting tonight. Jacob is working on getting twitter up and running.

Jan Derry announced that a 2nd year law student is interested in joining commission as a volunteer. She is interested in doing a fair housing clinic.

Karen Kunz will ask about schedule for different law clinics for potential partnerships.

Tim Hariston reported that the State HRC filed a lawsuit. (Jan filed complaints because of lack of compliance). They are in need of an Executive Director.

Don Spencer informed the Commission about the Municipal Equity Index Scoring (sponsored by National Human Rights Campaign) and efforts to improve Morgantown's score. Change was primarily in Part 1 with non-discrimination laws and amendments. Morgantown will be offered additional points once LGBTQ liaison to City Manager's Office is established. The city is also going to work on Youth Bullying Prevention Policy.

Don shared article about Huntington, WV. He mentioned that Kristen Cooper is trying to work with Huntington to bring "Open to All" campaign in Morgantown. NOTE: TO DO: Look more into partnership with Huntington to bring "Open to All" to Morgantown.

Priority Items:

Hate Crime Prevention Forum: Planning meeting with anyone who we see as a partner to that work, then second meeting that is open (before end of September). Jan is trying to make the meetings happen. The City Manager, Paul Brake is in support. Needs to occur by September 30 per Susan Buchannon at the DOJ.

TO DO: Put together a list of potential partners for planning meeting. E-mail Jan with more ideas/suggestions for potential partners. Partners might include:

- LGBTQ Plus Center (WVU)
- CCSJ (WVU)

- International Student Association
- Greater Morgantown Interfaith Association
- Laura at Health Rite
- Chief of Police Appointee
- Center for Black Culture and Research
- ONIDE
- NAACP
- ACLU
- NOW Morgantown

Don Spencer presented an article that helps towns to prepare for any hate demonstrations that might occur. Article was entitled *Coming Soon To Your Town*.

Judith Wilkinson and Don Spencer have been gathering materials on Compassionate Cities and Sanctuary Cities. Judith Wilkinson shared some information about Compassionate Cities and planted a seed to possibly read books about it to inform future work -- 12 Steps to a Compassionate Life.

Jan suggested adopting a shelf in library during Human Rights month.

Progress Reports:

The commission is ready to submit DEI Plan to the city. The Commission needs to turn in a report with goals and objectives by December. There is hope that the Compassionate City work will be a focus for next year's activities.

Priorities for 2018:

- Welcome Statement: Re-add this to future agenda.
- Creating website to help newcomers to community (potentially get intern or VISTA to work on this – Don has prototype)
- International Human Rights Day – re-visit on September agenda
- Re-visit Needs Assessment and/or community meeting – maybe coordinate with 2020 census
- Carry forward Compassionate City work

The DEI Plan is going to be assembled and sent to all commissioners by Drew Bucy.

Jan Derry and Don Spencer are going to meet with the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk about the DEI document.

The Commission reviewed the calendar to set an agenda for September.

New Business

LGBT Liaison – Commission needs to help City Manager move this along.

Law Enforcement Training – they will be doing some work to train officers on how to work with people with disabilities – KEEP IT ON AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER

Continue dialogue with Housing Commission and then move forward resolution.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 20th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes taken by Kate Levine-Freedman. Submitted to City by Kristen Cooper.