

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for January 17, 2019

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Marlene Robinson, Vice Chair
Kristen Cooper, Secretary
Karen Kunz
Drew Bucy
Don Spencer (Program Assistant)
Judith Wilkinson (Volunteer)

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:37 PM.

The agenda was distributed. Jan Derry made one addition (Disability Calendar 2019).

Public Session:

Two people from the public attended the meeting to observe and learn more about what the Commission does. They were Jackie Tressa and Olivia Dudley. Also in attendance was the guest speaker, Eve Foulkes.

Eve Foulkes is the head of the graphic design program at WVU and teaches a class “Design for Social Impact.” On March 28-30 she has arranged a conference entitled “Design Across Divides” in collaboration with many groups in Morgantown. The emphasis will be on using design to cross divides and creating tools for community change. The conference will include notable speakers as well as workshops and a community dinner. The City of Morgantown is partnering with WVU and has organized an international design competition to create the banners that are displayed on High Street. The HRC was invited to direct some topics that should be discussed. The price is \$75 and registration is available online at DesignAcrossDivides.org.

Minutes:

The minutes for December 2018 were distributed and reviewed. Two minor changes were requested. Marlene Robinson moved that the minutes be accepted with the changes. The motion was seconded by Drew Bucy, and the motion passed unanimously.

Communications:

Judith Wilkinson commented on the HRC’s effort to display the Welcome Statement at various locations in town. Judith has talked to the people at the Marriott. Judith asked that a committee be formed to

assist her in this endeavor. Entities such as the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Morgantown and the Morgantown Airport still need to be approached about purchasing the displays. At the same time it was agreed that it would be a good idea to print more of the Welcome Statement cards for use at events and general distribution. Marlene Robinson volunteered to research the cost of printing.

Jan Derry reported that she has not received any emails from the public associated with Human Rights issues. Jacob Powers was not in attendance to report on the social media program.

Tim Hairston was not in attendance to report on the State Human Rights Commission.

Jan Derry reminded everyone about the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event taking place on Monday, January 21st at the Metropolitan Theatre. In addition to the presentation at the theatre, there will also be a breakfast at the Mountainlair as well as an event at the AME Church.

Ramsey Kinsella was not present to report on the University's approach to refugees and asylum seekers.

Jan Derry distributed a copy of an email from the town of Beckley. They are endeavoring to add LGBTQ and gender identity rights to their city's non-discrimination ordinance. They are facing some opposition from groups and individuals (including the head of their HRC). Don Spencer spoke to Andrew Schneider at Fairness West Virginia about the situation. Andrew will be speaking in support of the ordinance at the second reading before the Beckley City Council. It was suggested that adding Morgantown's voice to the situation would not necessarily be helpful.

Priority Items:

The final version of the HRC's Annual Report was distributed and reviewed. Karen Kunz moved that the Annual Report be accepted as written; the motion was seconded by Drew Bucy and passed by a unanimous vote.

Attachment J for the City's DEI plan was distributed and reviewed. Marlene Robinson moved that the Attachment be accepted as written; the motion was seconded by Drew Bucy and passed by a unanimous vote.

The topic of inclusive housing and zoning was discussed. Jan Derry reported that the Commission received some recommended changes from Councilman Ron Delaney. Ron also suggested that we review the plan used in Amherst, MA. A meeting was proposed by Ron that would include the HRC, the City Planner, Code Enforcement and others) to come to a consensus on the elements of the proposed document before taking it to the City Council.

New Business:

Networking with local Human Rights organizations was discussed. Judith Wilkinson and Don Spencer recently attended an NAACP meeting and the organization seemed to be unaware of the work being done by the HRC – showing a need to share information on to pics of mutual concern. Jan Derry encouraged everyone to join the CCSJ as a means of staying informed on local efforts and events.

Ongoing Projects:

Judith Wilkinson reported that the process of becoming a Compassionate City does not require a great deal of effort, but there is a need to gather data and research about areas of concern. Judith asked if anyone would like to work with her on this initiative. Jan Derry referred her to Margaret Glenn in the Counseling and Rehabilitation Department at WVU.

Kristen Cooper described the Open to All campaign in Huntington, WV. She received some information on another program called All Kinds Welcome Here that seems to have some overlap with the Open to All program. She will ask Drew Bucy to work with her to gather more information and determine next steps.

Jan Derry distributed information from the Fair Shake Network.

Announcements:

Human Rights Day at the Capitol (renamed All are Welcome Here Day) takes place on February 7th. The day will include a press conference and a dinner.

The Commission agreed to look into the issue of disenfranchised voters and the rights of rehabilitated felons to vote.

Don Spencer submitted a letter to Jan Derry recently which informed the Commission that he will not continue in his role as a Program Assistant as of July 2019. It was agreed that his absence will be felt greatly because of his commitment to Human Rights and this Commission.

The next meeting of the Human Rights Commission will take place on February 21st, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper