

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Notes March 18, 2021

Present: Jan Derry, Vice Chair
Jena Martin
Ash Orr, Chair
Don Spencer, Secretary
Kristen Cooper, volunteer

Meeting called to order by Ash Orr at 6:45 p.m. On a motion by Jan Derry, seconded by Jena Martin, the meeting agenda as presented by the chair was approved without dissent.

Public Session: No participants identified themselves for the public session.

Minutes from February 18, 2021: On a motion by Jena Martin and seconded by Don Spencer the Commission voted to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2021 meeting as amended to include only the expanded motion of commendation for Kristen Cooper.

Communications: Ash Orr reported on a bill relating to access to identification for all persons which she had prepared for introduction to the WV Legislature (HB3193). She also reported that she is working with Mollie Kennedy and Spenser Dardin to develop anti-bias training for new elected and employment officials as a representative of Morgantown Pride, the ACLU and the NAACP.

Jan Derry reported on communications with City Clerk Christine Wade regarding the Commission's request to have Amy Chandler present the Commission's Annual Report to the City Council. No decision has been made for the presentation to date. Derry also called the Commission's attention to the meeting with the City Manager scheduled for 1:30 on March 24th.

Don Spencer reported on receiving a call from Gwendoline Marshall, advisor to the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, asking for information on the proposed penalty for violating the proposed Crown Non-Discrimination Amendment. (I explained that it is only to be processed as a HR complaint to-date). She also asked for communications on any changes which might occur pertaining to city CROWN legislation in the future.

Priority Items:

CROWN Resolution and Ordinance: Ash Orr that the Resolution on CROWN Non-Discrimination has been passed by City Council on a 7-0 vote. She also reported that Ryan Simonton has requested that the proposed CROWN Non-Discrimination Amendment to Section 153 of the City Code be placed on the March 30th Committee of the Whole Agenda, but that no response has yet been received.

Annual Report Distribution: Jan Derry noted that the Commission had approved the report and projected priorities for 2021 but that it has not decided on how to distribute the information –

other than having Amy Chandler present it to City Council. Don Spencer has provided a copy of the report to the City Communications Office for the City Website.

Legislative Session: Several bills in the legislature were identified as matters of concern including a bill which called for the discontinuation of municipal human rights commissions. It was agreed that a letter should be drafted identifying why human rights commissions are important to cities and to encourage cities to speak out in support of city rights state-wide. Don Spencer agreed to draft such a letter.

Fairness WV Training: No recent information has been received from Andrew Schneider on training available from Fairness West Virginia.

Meeting with City Manager on March 24: The agenda for the meeting with the City Manager at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24th is planned to include: 1) the City Code and Purpose of the HRC; 2) a Digital Orientation Packet; 3) the DEI Plan, Resolution and Proposed Ordinance; 4) the MEI Submission and Rating System; 5) the Minority Liaisons Coordinating Council Resolution and Planning. It was recommended that the Assistant City Manager be invited to attend. Ash Orr agreed to request the invitation.

Revision of Legislative Docket: Matter was not addressed because most recent document was unavailable.

Filling of Commission Vacancies: A discussion of membership status yielded the names of several interested in Commission membership.

Secretary Position Vacancy: Don Spencer agreed to fill-in a HRC Secretary for the remainder of the fiscal year (June 30). Election of officers takes place at the July meeting.

Open to All Program: It was agreed to remove the Open to All Program from agendas until such time as the Commission membership is refilled.

Complaint on Discrimination: Ash Orr reported that she had received a complaint relating to discrimination treatment in a youth martial arts program. It was agreed that the location of the possible discrimination needed to be confirmed to have occurred within boundaries of Morgantown, and that if it is within the City's jurisdiction of the City, a complaint form needs to be completed for a review to be undertaken.

Fair Housing Month: Jann Derry noted that April has been observed as Fair Housing Month for many years, but it is not certain if this observance will occur this year. If so, there will need to be a press release generated in cooperation with the City Communication Office.

On-going Projects: Due to the hour, agenda items in this section of the agenda were not undertaken.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the chair with the consent of the Commissioners present at 8 p.m.

