

City of Morgantown

Human Rights Commission - Held via Google Meets

Meeting notes from June 17th, 2021

Present: Ash Orr-Chair
Jan Derry-Vice Chair
Bonnie Brown
Jena Martin
Rosalyn "Rozzy" Lauderback
Don Spencer
Tim Hairston - State of WV HRC
Kristen Cooper-Volunteer

Meeting called to order by Ash Orr at 6:40 p.m. The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Minutes from the May meeting were edited under communications regarding Bonnie Brown's concern about website accessibility. Edits were also made under who would be reaching out to Chief Powell for a group meeting. Motion made by Ash Orr to accept edits, Jena Martin accepted, all were in favor.

Public Session: no participants identified themselves for the public session

Communications:

Jena Martin was re-elected to serve another term. Jena brought 3 council member's concerns to us about our methodology. The Council is concerned we as a commission are rushing things. Jena proposed we have a working meeting to lay out our goals for the next 6 - 12 months. This

would allow us to streamline communication with the council, as well as to stay on task. This meeting will be held on June 4th at 5:30pm via Google Meets with no voting.

Don Spencer missed two months due to health concerns. Don brought up the WV ACLU Magazine, mentioning the article around the police review board. We will be in position to write LoR. Jan Derry stated she would be interested in serving on the board, given her experience and resources for representing disabled individuals, the HRC is comfortable nominating Jan to the Morgantown City Council to serve on this board. Don also brought up the Dream Act, as well as his support of the HRC having an ordinance banning conversion therapy. Stated that the ACLU is in process of overturning HB 293. Don then mentioned the Ramada Inn Project - Ash Orr filled him in about the Unsheltered Homelessness Committee they are a part of, which is addressing the Ramada Inn. They encouraged Don to attend the meetings with them to stay up to date. Lastly, Don brought up the City Diversity Event and Equality Report, both of which will be addressed at our working meeting.

Jan Derry mentioned the US Attorney General Press Conference, which was around the community involvement / response with police. Jan encouraged the commission to watch or listen to the conference, Bonnie provided us with the link to watch via email.

Bonnie Brown mentioned a class that is being held to discuss Native American Boarding Schools and the impact those had on the Native American Community. She will be providing the Commission with the meeting details.

Ash Orr updated the commission about the ordinance to ban conversion therapy on a municipal level. They have the latest draft from Fairness WV and will be working to have things ready to go by the HRC working meeting. Don Spencer supports this ordinance coming from the HRC as a whole rather than just Ash Orr as the city hall LGBTQ+ liaison. Don stated, also, that this needs to be done carefully. Ash will be following up with the Morgantown City Attorney to tie up any loose ends.

Tim Hairston with the State Human Rights Commission stated they will be meeting again next month in-person, and that their meetings have been moved to Quarterly.

Priority items:

1. Elections: positions included: secretary, vice-chair, and chair. Ash Orr nominated Rozzy Lauderback for Secretary, Jena seconded. All in favor. Ash Orr nominated Jan Derry to be re-elected as Vice-Chair, Jan was elected by affirmative action. Jan Derry nominated Ash Orr to be re-elected as Chair, Ash was elected by affirmative action.
2. Civilian Police Review and Advisory Board Policy- No real update. Council is holding off on policy updates until the new council is enacted on 7/1/21

3. Banning of Conversion Therapy: Ash Orr has the latest draft from Fairness WV and will be working to have things ready to go by the HRC working meeting. Don Spencer supports this ordinance coming from the HRC as a whole rather than just Ash Orr as the city hall LGBTQ+ liaison. Don stated, also, that this needs to be done carefully. Ash will be following up with the Morgantown City Attorney to tie up any loose ends. Hope is to have this in front of the new council by the July COW meeting with a vote in August.
4. MEI: The Conversion Therapy Ban would give us 2 additional points on our MEI score. We need verification of LGBTQ+ City Hall Liaison on the city website - Ash will be reaching out to the assistant city manager to obtain needed information. Still waiting for resolution on the reported hate crimes. Ash has reached out to Chief Powell and Officer Foster - they will also be reaching out to various law enforcement agencies after the holiday to gather more information.
5. DEI: The language concerns council member Bergan had have been resolved and pushed through at the last council meeting. Don is concerned about the HRC's relationship with the DEI - this will be addressed at our working meeting. We need our annual report which comes from the city. Ash will be emailing after the holiday to obtain the needed information.

Progress Reports:

1. Municipal Equality Index (MEI): The HRC is extremely grateful to Kristen Cooper who has volunteered to spearhead the 2021 submission. We will be addressing more during the HRC working meeting.
2. Project Status: No major updates - the HRC will be addressing projects at the June Working Meeting.
3. Hate crime prevention forum: No report
4. Anti-discrimination training: Molly Kennedy of the ACLU of WV and Ash Orr will be leading the training. Date TBA.
5. Commissions Legislative Docket: No major updates.

New Business:

1. Meeting with Chief of Police: Now that the new chief has been appointed, the HRC wants to extend an invitation for the Chief to join us at the HRC meeting for a conversation. Ash has reached out to Chief Powell and will be hopefully setting up a time for him to meet with the Commission.

Looking ahead: The HRC will be creating Liaison position descriptions after the July meeting for future liaisons.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 15th, 2021 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Motion for adjournment was made by Ash Orr, meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

