

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for July 18, 2019

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Kristen Cooper, Secretary
Jacob Powers (by phone)
Jena Martin
Kate Levine-Freedman
Don Spencer (Program Assistant)

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:46 PM.

The agenda was distributed and approved with no changes.

Public Session:

In attendance was DeeDee McIntosh, a liaison from the PFLAG group. She is a resident of Star City. Morgantown PFLAG received its charter in April 2019 and the group is reaching out to other entities like the HRC to lend support. Jena Martin moved that DeeDee (Diana) McIntosh serve as the PFLAG liaison to the HRC. The motion was seconded by Kate Levine-Freeman and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes:

Copies of the June 2019 minutes were distribution. Jena Martin moved that the minutes be approved as written; Jacob Powers seconded the motion. The minutes where approved unanimously.

Communications:

There were no commissioner updates.

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

Tim Hairston, representative from the State HRC, was not in attendance to provide updates.

In regards to the Open to All campaign, the mayor and City Manager have concerns about the city's public image in regards to the City's identity being defined by an outside group. It is believed that it will be seen negatively in light of the annexation issues. Because of this they have requested that we hold off on moving forward with the national organization. A few people from PFLAG used the sample sign-up forms to enroll in the program. Those forms will be held and reissued when things are official. It was suggested that we may need to completely rebrand the whole program.

Jacob Powers and Jan Derry hosted an HRC information table at the recent Housing Fair. There was a good turn-out and HRC literature and the Welcome Statement were distributed to interested attendees. Many people, including one person from the LGBTQ community and a disabled person, were unaware of the HRC and the work the commission does.

The City Council passed the Anti-Bullying ordinance. Now the implementation phase must begin. Entities like BOPARC and the Public Library need to come up with a plan for implementation. It was suggested that they look online where there is a great deal of information. It was also suggested that all of the entities affected by the ordinance need to sit down with the City and discuss how to move forward.

The Minority Liaison resolution was reviewed. One person from Health Right and one person from the Muslim Center are interested in taking part. Other minority groups that should be included are NOW, the Jewish community, and the homeless shelter. The Office of Global Affairs at WVU was discussed as a possible resource. Any other ideas will be sent to Jan Derry.

Priority Items:

Recently, Marlene Robinson resigned from the Commission for health reasons. The City Clerk informed Jan Derry that Marty Shamberger (former mayor of Morgantown) has applied to be a commissioner. In total the City Council has interviewed 3 candidates from which they will select one. It was decided that we would communicate to the City Clerk that our priorities are to find a person who is hard working, experienced, and/or a person of diversity.

The Municipal Equality Index is due on July 31st. Don Spencer, Kristen Cooper and Kristen Jones have been gathering information for submission. A draft of the submission was distributed. Don Spencer reported that the City Manager is interested in doing well on the Index – as is the CVB who wants to use the index to promote the city. The City Manager is looking into adding the designation of gender identity to its Equal Opportunity-Affirmative action statement. The City is also investigating the possibility of adding transgender medical benefits to its package. Jena Martin agreed to look over the MEI submission from a legal standpoint and also suggested a few revisions to the cover letter.

The DEI Plan will be brought before the City Council Committee of the Whole on August 27th. Don Spencer will be meeting with the City Attorney to develop ordinances for implementation of the DEI which include 1) non-discrimination of employees, and 2) a process of executing the DEI. Voting by the City Council will take place on the first and third Tuesdays of September. Jan Derry encouraged the commissioners to get members of other groups who are interested in diversity to attend those meeting of the City Council.

Jena Martin distributed a flow chart that displayed the HRC complaint process. The chart did a good job of showing how the process takes place based on various scenarios. The HRC is considering putting a

copy of the chart on our website. Jena will make a few small updates and email a PDF to Jan. Jan also asked for a narrative version of the chart for visually impaired individuals.

Officer appointments for the HRC were discussed and nominations were put forth for each of the three positions. Voting took place and Jacob Powers was elected to serve as the Chair, Kate Levin-Freeman will serve as Vice Chair, and Kristen Cooper will continue as Secretary.

New Business:

Jacob Powers explained an opportunity for an HRC-themed and sponsored art mural in Morgantown. Jessie at Mon Arts will start the process, however the endeavor will require a grant to fund it. Additionally, the program will need to be cleared by the City Manager.

Ongoing Projects:

At the next meeting, the Commission will review the new project list and assign people to the individual projects.

Announcements:

Jan Derry announced that beginning August 9th (and continuing for one month) there will be an art exhibit at MAC featuring artists who have been touched by mental health issues.

The next meeting of the Human Rights Commission will take place on August 15, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper