

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for January 16, 2020

Present: Jacob Powers, Chair
Kristen Cooper, Secretary
Jan Derry
Ramsey Kinsella
Tim Hairston (Liaison with State HRC)
Don Spencer (Program Associate)
Judith Wilkinson (Volunteer)
DeeDee McIntosh (PFLAG Liaison)
Rozzi Lauderback (Morgantown Pride Liaison)

Meeting called to order by Jacob Powers, Chair, at 6:33 P.M.

The agenda was distributed and there was one addition regarding the upcoming Lobby Day in Charleston. The agenda was approved with that change.

Public Session:

No one from the public was in attendance at the meeting.

Minutes:

The November 2019 and December 2019 minutes were reviewed. One change was requested to the December minutes. Jan Derry moved that the minutes be approved as with the change; Ramsey Kinsella seconded the motion. The minutes where approved unanimously.

Communications:

There has been no recent activity with the Commission's social media, email or phone line.

Tim Hairston reported the State HRC has not had a meeting recently and, therefore had nothing formal to report. The State's Executive Director told Tim that he would like to hold a state-wide HRC meeting in Morgantown this year. Tim will follow-up and get more information at the State's meeting next week.

An article appeared in the Dominion Post regarding an Immigration Resolution. Jan Derry read the article which stated that Morgantown will continue to accept resettling refugees. Don Spencer noted that the Commission had a statement approved in 2017 that was similar to the current resolution.

Priority Items:

The MLK Jr. Day celebration will take place on January 20th. The HRC will have a table at the event and distribute information. Jan Derry, Don Spencer and Judith Wilkinson will be in attendance to represent the Commission.

The Human Rights Award ceremony was discussed. The commissioners agreed that there was a great turn-out and that it was a successful event.

The DEI Plan was discussed. Don Spencer reported that meetings had been held with the mayor, deputy mayor and Cris Mayo of the WVU LGTBO Center. The need for a “certified” training program was addressed, and it was suggested that the WVU LGBTQ Center could carry-out the training classes free of charge. This would allow for ongoing training to take place more conveniently and would add greater exposure to the DEI efforts. Copies of Section 5 of the DEI Plan were distributed. It was agreed that the HRC should distribute this updated section to the City Council before their Committee of the Whole meeting on February 25th. Commissioners were encouraged to be present at that Council meeting to show support for the plan. Jan Derry moved to accept the DEI Section 5 Plan as revised. The motion was seconded by Ramsey Kinsella. The motion passed unanimously.

The 2019 MEI score was brought up by Don Spencer. He made the following points: 1) Morgantown did not make the submission deadline and therefore did not receive credits for some new programs such as the Anti-Bullying Ordinance. 2) To get credit for having an LGBTQ Liaison, the position and the name of the liaison needs to appear on the City’s website, and that could earn us 5 points in future, 3) the main information for the MEI needs to be emailed to the Human Rights Campaign in advance of the paper submission, 4) Any points we hoped to gain via the Open to All program come from a category where the city already has earned the maximum number of points. Don Spencer talked to the program director at the MEI and was able to get 5 points added to our score for the Anti-Bullying Ordinance. To gain points for a liaison, it was suggested that we find a representative who is part of the LGBTQ population and appoint them as a liaison to the City Manager (with that information posted to the City’s website). This would be done prior to or alongside of the Minority Liaison program that we are currently forming. Ash Cutright volunteered to take the liaison position as long as they are supported by the HRC in regards to legal matters. Ash will work with Morgantown Pride to get the appointment approved by the organization. Separately, it was noted that the Mayor is seeking job descriptions for the posts on the Minority Liaison Council.

A revised version of the HRC 2019 Annual Report was distributed (including goals for 2020). It was noted that a copy of the Report needs to be submitted to the City Clerk with a request that a copy go into each Councilperson’s mailbox. Ramsey Kinsella or Jan Derry plan to attend the next City Council

meeting on January 28th to present the report in person. Kristen Cooper moved to approve the Annual Report as revised. The motion was seconded by Ramsey Kinsella. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

The WVU Community Film Series is now disconnected from the WVU Division of DEI. Don Spencer contacted a faculty member in the Humanities Department at WVU to make inquiries but did not receive a reply. Jacob Powers will investigate the name of the appropriate contact person.

New Welcome Banners have arrived and include the changes regarding veteran status and blindness. The HRC is in need of copies of the Welcome Statement cards, and Don Spencer reported that Signs Plus can print 500 copies of the cards for \$125. It was agreed that HRC contact information should appear on the back of the cards. Don will have Andrew Stacy approve the contact information before printing.

Judith Wilkinson brought up two events that are taking place soon. The first is Lobby Day in Charleston. Dee Dee McIntosh reported that a group has already organized a car pool which will be leaving from the First Presbyterian Church. Judith also provided information about an OLLI information series with an LGBTQ focus will be taking place in January and February. Jacob Powers agreed to add this information to the HRC's Facebook page.

For the Anti-Bullying Ordinance, the HRC is supposed to provide implementation information to BOPARC, the library, and Woodburn Center. Jan Derry offered to contact the groups and steer them towards a very comprehensive website (stopbullying.org) which they can use as their resource.

Jacob Powers will drive past the Inclusive City sign to see if the foliage has been cut back to reveal the sign. Don Spencer suggested that he wants to get new and additional signs to place around the city.

The Minority Liaison Coordinating Council was discussed again. The goal is to have a complete list by the next meeting to put alongside of job descriptions for the various positions on the Council. It was suggested to include a copy of the resolution along with the job descriptions.

There was a discussion about the National HRC calendar and how it should be posted on our website. It was suggested that a Google calendar with pertinent holidays would be a good option.

It was agreed that Jacob Powers would send out a doodle poll in an effort to find a good meeting time for a Commission orientation meeting.

Ongoing Projects:

The Indigenous Peoples Day resolution is written and ready to go, but we have not found anyone from the Native American community to speak on its behalf. It was agreed that we should make an effort as soon as possible to get the resolution approved by the City Council. Initially we will speak with the

Mayor and Deputy Mayor to get a reading on the possibilities of the resolution passing. There was a brief discussion as to whether to group the Land Acknowledgement statement with the Indigenous Peoples Day resolution.

Announcements:

Don Spencer announced that Jan Derry will be receiving the MLK Jr. Award on Monday for her efforts on behalf of human rights. Jan was congratulated on this extraordinary honor. The ceremony will take place in the Mountainlair Ballroom.

The next meeting of the Human Rights Commission will take place on February 20, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper