

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

Present:        Jacob Powers, Chair  
                  Kristen Cooper, Secretary  
                  Drew Bucy  
                  Jena Martin  
                  Jan Derry  
                  Ramsey Kinsella  
                  Don Spencer (Program Associate)  
                  Dee Dee McIntosh (PFLAG Liaison)  
                  Ash Cutright (Morgantown Pride Liaison)

**Meeting called to order by Jacob Powers, Chair, at 6:36 P.M. The meeting took place online due to pandemic restrictions.**

The agenda was distributed, there were no changes to the agenda, and it was approved.

**Public Session:**

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

**Minutes:**

The February 2020 minutes were reviewed. Kristen Cooper moved that the minutes be approved as written; Jena Martin seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Communications:**

Regarding recent activity with the Commission's social media, email or phone line -- Jacob reported that he has not received any emails and that he is posting information about the census on the Facebook page. It was suggested that he post information about the current absentee ballots and the need to keep your information private when returning the form to the County Clerk.

Tim Hairston was not present to report the State HRC.

**Priority Items:**

The HRC budget for the coming year was discussed. Jan Derry gave some basic information about the budget and said that it is very similar to what we submitted and received this past year. We have

received no word on the approval of the new budget and it was suggested that Andrew Stacy be contacted for an update. Jan Derry will email a copy of the new budget to everyone for their review. There are still funds in the current budget that need to be used before June 30. Don Spencer will have some posters printed as well as the Welcome Statement rack cards. It was suggested that we purchase one or more tabletop Welcome Statement banners for use at hotels and for our own use at events. Don Spencer will get a price for those and share the information at the next meeting.

In regards to the HRC Annual Report, Ramsey Kinsella confirmed that the copies of the report were placed in the mailboxes of each City Council member at the beginning of February. Though it is too late to make any formal presentation of the information this year, it was suggested that next year we create a total picture of the Commission's activities and present that to the City Council.

Jan Derry has a draft of the Anti-Bullying Ordinance that includes a message to the educators and program administrators that it is a good time to work on this project while students are not at school or at recreation programs. Jan will send the draft to everyone by email.

At the last meeting, Don Spencer shared a draft of the guidelines for the Minority Liaison Coordinating Council. Don shared a new version with the Commission for review. Jena Martin moved to approve the Guidelines and Drew Bucy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Don reminded the group that responsibility for the Coordinating Council will be in the hands of the new City Manager (when one is selected). In the meantime it might be possible to work with the Interim City Manager. Ash Cutright suggested that get the guidelines approved at the City Council meeting of the whole with Paul Brake in attendance. Don Spencer will get the document to Paul Brake and the City Council.

Ash Cutright distributed copies of the latest version of job descriptions for the LGBTQ+ City of Morgantown Liaison position and the Morgantown Police Officer Liaison position. Jan Derry asked if the documents had been approved by the City Attorney, and Ask reported that he received the documents two months ago. Don Spencer said that items like job descriptions are not appropriate to bring to the City Council – that they are more of an HR concern. Ask reminded us that the Mayor specifically asked for these job descriptions at a Commission meeting a few months ago. Don then said that the City Manager needs to be involved in this matter – as well as the Police Chief. Kristen Cooper asked that the Commission move this issue forward by giving the descriptions to the Mayor as he requested. Kristen said that moving in any other direction would be a step backwards in our efforts to make the Liaisons a reality. Jacob Powers suggested we give both parties the information. Jan Derry suggested that we send the descriptions to the Mayor and cc the City Manager. Jena Martin made a motion that the job descriptions be submitted to the Mayor with a copy to the City Manager. The motion was seconded by Jan Derry. A vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Jacob Powers suggested that Jan Derry lead the Commission in an orientation. The meeting would take place online. Jan requested a few weeks to get the documents together, and Jacob Powers volunteered to assist her in the preparation. At tentative date of May 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm was chosen.

## **Progress Reports:**

Jena Martin has set up a meeting with the City Attorney to review the updated Complaint Process for the last week of April.

Everyone was encouraged to fill out the Census.

## **New Business:**

Jan Derry received an inquiry from the city where Paul Brake will be serving as the new City Manager. She reported on the positive dealings the Commission has had with Paul Brake. Don Spencer requested an exit interview with Paul Brake. Jacob Powers will send an email request.

Dee Dee McIntosh reported that the League of Women Voters will not be holding their candidates forum this spring due to logistics with the pandemic. They are hoping to organize a forum in the fall.

As a follow-up to the DEI Plan of Action, Don Spencer reported that training for city employees needs to be planned by the City's HR Department. He also mentioned that the City Attorney is making some changes to the personnel policies in the DEI Plan.

The MEI submission prep will be beginning soon. There is an online seminar on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Don Spencer and Dee Dee McIntosh met with the HR office to discuss Transgender Health Insurance. There are some obstacles regarding domestic partnership benefits because WV has no provision for domestic partnership outside of marriage. It was suggested that we contact Huntington, WV to ask how they have dealt with this issue. Ash Cutright will find a contact for the Huntington Mayor's office.

## **Ongoing Projects:**

Ryan Simonton, City Attorney, had a discussion with the Open to All organization. Jacob Powers will get an update about the conversation and report to the HRC at the next meeting.

Don Spencer is working towards finding the appropriate people at the WVU to discuss the Community Film Series. The program is in limbo at this time due to the pandemic. Don Spencer said that overall, the program needs to be completely rebuilt with WVU with a specific department assigned to oversee it.

The replacement Welcome Banners arrived and one has been placed in the City Hall and another at the Municipal Airport. Don Spencer has not been able to install the other two banners due to the pandemic restrictions. It was requested that the Commission research purchasing an additional banner with the available funds in the current budget.

Indigenous People's Day was discussed. One obstacle is our inability to find a Native American to speak on behalf of this issue. Jacob Powers suggested placing some information on Facebook to find an appropriate person to be the sponsor. It was noted that Monongalia County School Board has incorporated the name change on their school calendar. Next month we will vote on how to make progress on this project.

The topic of the annual Housing Fair was discussed. It was questioned whether the fair will take place at all this year.

The Implicit Bias and Confronting Bigotry Training was removed from the agenda.

In regards to the Gun Violence Resolution – Don Spencer spoke with the Mayor, Barbara Fleischauer and Danielle Walker about the resolution. He noted that it is a political matter.

The Inclusivity Mural was discussed. Patty's Art Spot is interested in working with us on the actual application of the art for the mural. We are still looking for a canvas. We will then have to deal with the issue of funding. Jacob Powers will contact Jesse Heady about the possibilities available. It was suggested that we also speak with Eve Faulkes about the matter.

**Announcements:**

The next meeting of the Human Rights Commission will take place on May 21, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper