

City of Morgantown  
Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Minutes for July 18, 2020

Present: Jacob Powers, Chair  
Kristen Cooper, Secretary  
Jan Derry  
Ash Cutright  
Jena Martin  
Ramsey Kinsella  
Amy Chandler  
Dee Dee McIntosh (PFLAG 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 was one change – moving the Film Festival to New Business, and the agenda was approved with the change.

The current commissioners as well as the new commissioners (Ash Cutright and Amy Chandler) and a Morgantown resident (Rebecca Sykes) introduced themselves.

**Public Session:**

Rebecca Sykes talked about her interest in volunteering with the commission. Her interests include diversity, equity and inclusion especially in schooling. She is new to Morgantown and is looking forward to getting involved in human rights issues.

**Minutes:**

The June 2020 minutes were reviewed. Jan Derry moved that the minutes be approved as written, Jena Martin seconded the motion. The minutes where approved unanimously.

**Communications:**

For commissioner updates – Jena Martin met with the search committee for the new city manager and expressed the need for a candidate with experience dealing with policy issues.

Regarding recent activity with the Commission’s social media, email or phone line -- Jacob Powers reported that he is receiving any emails that are sent to the general HRC email address – and that a copy of those emails will also go directly to the City Attorney so he can be alerted to any complaints being

filed. Jacob will be posting the job descriptions for the liaison positions with the City Manager and the Police Department on the HRC Facebook page.

Tim Hairston was not present to report the State HRC.

### **Priority Items:**

Kristen Cooper reviewed the sections of the MEI that need to be completed by members of the committee. Those sections included 1) healthcare benefits (with which Dee Dee McIntosh was able to assist), 2) HealthRight (which Jan Derry and Jacob Powers will follow-up on), 3) Liaison to the Police Department Job Description (Jacob Powers to send to Kristen), 4) Hate Crime Reporting (Jan Derry was able to determine there were no hate crimes reported in 2018), 5) Testing Restrictive State Law (Kristen will send email to committee to see if anyone has ideas). Jena Martin offered to proofread the MEI document prior to its submission. Kristen Cooper plans to send the MEI on July 27<sup>th</sup>, thus all work needs to be completed in the coming week.

A meeting with the acting City Manager regarding the Special Committee on Community Policing and Police Review Board will take place on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup>. Jacob Powers will attend and Ash Cutright asked if she could also attend. The HRC is working with the City as well as the NAACP, ACLU and CCSJ to create a resolution that will represent a cross-section of the city.

The Black Lives Matter crosswalk will be proposed at the next City Council meeting. It will be placed in Greenmont and will have a black, yellow and white theme. A mural painting group has been approached about doing the painting. Commissioners were asked to show support at the City Council meeting.

HRC election of officers took place. Nominees included Jacob Powers for Chairman, Ash Cutright for Vice Chairman, and Kristen Cooper for Secretary. With no objection to the slate of officers nominated a vote of acclamation was held and was affirmed unanimously.

It was agreed that the new Mayor should be invited to an upcoming HRC meeting and that we should be prepared with an agenda of items to discuss. He will be invited to join us in September and Jacob Powers will extend the invitation.

Jan Derry posed the question about the HRC's interest in co-sponsoring the Human Rights Film Festival in conjunction with WVU. There was some discussion about how the film festival would take place logistically due to the pandemic. Jena Martin volunteered to be the liaison between the HRC and the University to coordinate the program. Ramsey Kinsella agreed to look into the Museum Event Center as a possible venue.

### **Progress Reports:**

The printing order was picked up by Jan Derry and she has the signs, brochures, and welcome cards. There was some question about the accuracy of the email address.

Regarding the Complaint Process – if a complaint is filed online or by mail it will go to both Jena Martin and the City Attorney. The City Attorney will do an initial check of the jurisdiction of the complaint before it is turned over to the HRC.

The acting City Manager has reached out to some of the organizations that are part of the Minority Liaison Coordinating Council and has suggestions for 2 of the positions and tentatively anticipates getting the other positions filled by December.

The Open to All program was discussed. The question was raised about its value to the community as well as what it would involve as far as a commitment of time and labor from the HRC. There was discussion about the benefits of creating a localized program (which would require man hours) vs. the established national program (which would not require a time commitment). It was decided to table the issue for a few months.

The Inclusivity Mural was stalled because of the covid epidemic, but has regained interest because of the Black Lives Matter movement. The idea of an Inclusivity mural is appealing at this time, and Jacob will have another discussion with Jesse regarding finding an appropriate canvas space.

#### **New Business:**

There was a brief discussion of the Safe Storage Ordinance. Amy Chandler suggested the WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence and RDVIC may be good resources for this ordinance.

Jacob Powers suggested that Morgantown organize a large National Night Out event for next year at a central location like the Coliseum. He mentioned creating a resolution behind this initiative.

#### **Ongoing Projects:**

Indigenous Peoples Day has been difficult to execute because we have not been able to find anyone to speak on behalf of it. We agreed to re-look at the resolution and put it on the Priority Items list for next month.

Dee Dee McIntosh suggested we add the National Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov. 20) to the Annual HRC Calendar.

A display of the many Human Rights posters (possibly at the MAC) in December was discussed. Jan will contact the MAC to inquire about possibilities. Amy Chandler suggested we hold a poster design contest at the same time.

It was agreed to invite the chief of police to an HRC meeting – possibly in October.

The Project List was briefly reviewed. The commission will take a closer look at the list during our orientation meeting which will take place in the next few weeks. Amy Chandler will send out a doodle poll to determine the date of the meeting.

We need to decide where to put the smaller welcome banner signs. Some suggestions were the Holiday Inn, Scholar Hotel, and Springhill Suites.

**Announcements:**

The next meeting will take place on August 20, 2020 and will be via video conference.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Submitted by Kristen Cooper