

City of Morgantown

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

*Annual Report
for
Program Year 2016*



December 31, 2016

Commission Address:

**Morgantown City Hall
389 Spruce Street
Morgantown, WV 26505**

Human Rights Commission Annual Report for 2016 and Priorities for 2017

The first half of 2016 proved to be a challenging time for the Commission in as much as fewer commissioners were able to attend meetings and several commissioners who were new were not able to work on priorities planned for the year. Three veteran commissioners were lost due to employment changes or because of moving outside of the City boundaries thereby creating a need for three more new commissioners for the second year in a row. In as much as the Human Rights Commission does not have administrative staff and is a “working board”, such changes in membership presents challenges to continuity and output.

Nevertheless, the Commission still completed several important accomplishments including projects projected as priorities for 2016. Dave Bott and new Public Communications Manager Krista Baker, continues to provide important support for the Commission’s work. Ed Cole of the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion provided excellent leadership for the implementation of the first Human Rights Film Festival and the work of its program advisory committee.

Specific accomplishments of the Commission during 2016 in relation its priorities set for the year have been...

1. Prepared a comprehensive redraft of the City of Morgantown’s ordinance on human rights to be more consistent with standards recommended by the Human Rights Campaign organization and ordinances adopted in Charleston, Huntington, and Wheeling. (Committee members included Jan Derry, Matt Miller, Marlene Robinson, Dave Saville, Judith Wilkinson, and Don Spencer.)
2. Supported the inaugural year for the Annual University-Community Human Rights Film Festival conducted by the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and co-sponsored by the Morgantown Human Rights Commission. Over 370 persons participated in the five film festival.
3. Responded to a request for a recommended transgender policy by the City of Morgantown administration. Recommended use of policy based on U.S. Department of Education rule that transgender students in public schools must be allowed to use restrooms which correspond with their gender identity.
4. Drafted a Welcome Statement for recommending to the City Council for use on the City website and in lobby of City Hall.
5. Drafted a “New to Morgantown” web site program based on the Iowa City, IA program. (The program has not yet been presented for approval.)
6. Responded to a request for a recommended transgender policy by the City of Morgantown administration. Recommended use of policy based on U.S. Department of Education rule that transgender students in public schools must be allowed to use restrooms which correspond with their gender identity.

7. Attended a candlelight vigil in solidarity with families and friends of LGBT persons killed in mass shooting at a Florida nightclub.
8. Prepared new commissioner orientation materials and conducting an orientation session for new and continuing commissioners in August 2016.
9. Prepared a brochure explaining the work of the Human Rights Commission for distribution to City officials and public events.
10. Completed the Municipal Equality Index narrative application for the Mayor of the City to submit for the City of Morgantown to the Human Rights Campaign in September. The Commission Also prepared proposed job descriptions for recommended LGBTQ liaisons with the City Manager's Office and the Police Department.
11. Provided input on criteria for City Council to use in selecting a new City Manager.
12. Conducted an International Human Rights Day Award Ceremony in December on the third week in December at a City Council meeting recognizing a community organization for outstanding human rights service, Proud Students Against Land Mines established at the St. Francis School, and an individual human rights advocacy contributor, Evan Hansen of Downstream Strategies. A reception was held for some thirty persons thereafter at the Aull House.

Priorities for 2017

1. Approve the "Welcome to Morgantown" statement and promote its adoption the City Council for use in the City Hall, on the City website, at the City Airport and for other uses authorize by the City administration.
2. Develop and approve the "Resolution Supporting the Rights of Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylees" and promote its adoption by the City Council as a City policy resolution.
3. Complete work on a proposed City Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan relating to City employees and volunteers for submission to the City Manager for critical analysis and subsequently to the City Council for its adoption.
4. Join some 40 other primarily university cities by working with the WVU Native American Studies Program to develop and approve a "Resolution to Change the Second Monday in October from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day" and seek the resolution's adoption by the Morgantown City Council.
5. Complete the year-long process of preparing and approving a "Universal Design Incentive Ordinance" and submit the draft to the City administration and to the City Council for its adoption.

6. Complete the year-long process of preparing and approving a redraft of the City Human Rights Ordinance and submit the redraft to the City administration and to the City Council for its adoption.
7. Prepare a draft proposed response to the Municipal Equality Index annual survey for the Mayor to submit in August to the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, DC.
8. Conduct a third annual observance of International Human Rights Day and present Commission awards to an organization and an individual win the community who have made outstanding contributions toward the protection or promotion of human rights.
9. Re-establish work to prepare an Inclusive City Plan focusing on citizen needs identified on the Community Needs Survey of 2014, the Town Hall Meeting of 2015, and other pertinent resources to provide steps which allow the City to move forward in addressing substantively priority citizen needs.
10. Explore benefits and feasibility for Morgantown to seek designation as a “Compassionate City”.

Commission Membership for 2016

Jan Derry, Chair
 Matt Blair
 Kristen Cooper
 Matthew Miller, Secretary
 Billie Murray
 Anna Marlene Robinson, V. Chair
 Dave Saville
 Don Spencer, Secretary
 Fran Whitman
 Judith Wilkinson

Dave Bott – Administration Representative
 Tim Hairston – Liaison w/ State HRC
 Anne Marie Lofaso – Law School Liaison
 Don Spencer – Volunteer Program Assistant

2016 Commission Members Completing Service June 30, 2016

Matthew Blair, Don Spencer, Fran Whiteman

Proposed City Welcome Statement

“Welcome to Morgantown! The City of Morgantown welcomes all people regardless of race, religion, national origin, sex, color, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, abilities, gender identity, economic status, or life situation. We strive to be an inclusive community for our residents and visitors. We ask everyone to act with a helpful intent, to respond to each other with civility, and to treat our environment with respect.”