

City of Morgantown
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Annual Report
for
Program Year 2018



December 31, 2018

Commission Address:

Morgantown City Hall

389 Spruce Street

Morgantown, WV 26505

Human Rights Commission Annual Report for 2018 and Priorities for 2019

Whereas in 2017 several projects which had been worked on over time were brought forward to completion and action by City Council, 2018 has been one of those interim years when there has been lots of work and deliberation, few visible completions, and no projects brought forward to City Council for action. The Human Rights Commission continues to work as a working board with no City staff regularly attending meetings nor assisting with regular operations. It is important to note, however, that City Attorney Ryan Simonton has again been as major source of technical assistance in drafting complaint review procedures with the input of the Commission and that City public information director has provided significant support by managing the Commission website and working with Commission Secretary Kristen Cooper. Administrative Assistant Carol Allen has also been supportive by helping with the preparation of several regular and special meeting packets.

Specific accomplishments of the Commission during 2018 in relation to its set priorities for year:

1. Oriented three new members of the Commission at August Commission meeting.
2. Completed a detailed, thoroughly researched draft of a City of Morgantown Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan and submitted it for City administrative review before final editing and submission to City Council for action.
3. Met with Fairmont-Morgantown Housing Authority representatives to discuss a Commission resolution prepared on increasing housing authority service accessibility and capacities in Morgantown; representatives in turn met with the Commissioners for information sharing and discussion of proposed service improvements.
4. Prepared letter of concern to City Council and Mountain Line Transit regarding keeping a transit depot location in the downtown Morgantown area to better serve transit user access to downtown services and employment.
5. Co-sponsored the WVU Community Film Series with WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
6. Expanded communication with the public by establishing a Commission Facebook Page.
7. Submitted questions on Human Rights to League of Women Voters for use in candidate forums.
8. Conducted Fair Housing Poster competition at Morgantown High School and provided two Commissioners to serve as judges.
9. Submitted material describing importance of community input in planning public responses to volatile protests/demonstrations/rallies to Morgantown Chief of Police. Response to Commission indicated that plan is oriented to a police-only response in Morgantown.
10. Met with the Mayor and a delegate to discuss a draft of a resolution on gun violence. Final draft to be prepared after further consultations and meeting with the "Mom's Demand Action" organization.
11. Redrafted and prepared City submission for a national Municipal Equality Index program involving 506 municipalities throughout the country. City received featured recognition and an improved score of 80 due to adoption of Non-Discrimination Ordinance on October 17, 2017.
12. Met with City Manager to plan addition of an LGBTQ Liaison for the City.
13. Conferred with City of Huntington official to receive technical assistance on its "Open to All" program for local merchants.
14. Met with Department of Justice Representative Susan Buchanan to plan hate crimes prevention. DOJ planning changed and planning for training was discontinued for this year.

15. Met with Downtown Task Force to discuss service sponsorship for people experiencing homelessness and Commission serving as link for the program with the City.
16. Met with City Communications Director to discuss social media rules for compliance relating to City web site.
17. Compiled a history of the Human Rights Commission action since reconstitution in 2012.
18. Prepared resolution on inclusionary zoning/housing for consideration by City Council representative and planning staff.
19. Participated in Community Development Block Grant hearings on consolidated plan to present information on impediment related s to fair housing - at Dorsey's Knob and City Hall.
20. Received information on Blue Zoning discussions generated by Health and Wellness Commission.
21. Prepared and implemented program – with awards - for International Human Rights Day.

Priorities for 2019

1. Facilitate adoption and implementation of DEI Plan by City Administration and City Council.
2. Promote Training as proposed in DEI Plan.
3. Advocate for Law Enforcement Training for Response to Persons with Disabilities
4. Advocate for community representation in planning for possible violent protests/demonstrations/rallies.
5. Organize forum on hate crimes prevention.
6. Assess viability of plan for Compassionate City self-designation by City Council.
7. Implement “Open to All” Campaign before submission of 2019 MEI Plan in July.
8. Follow-up on promoting Welcome to Morgantown statement.
9. Complete “Welcome to Morgantown” service information for web site.
10. Organize information for immigrants/ refugees and asylees for web site.
11. Continue to advocate for increased visibility and outreach by Housing Authority in City.
12. Work with WVU Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to reactivate WVU Community Film Series.
13. Advocate for adoption on anti-bullying ordinance before MEI submission in July.
14. Work with City manager to adopt plan for LGBTQ Liaison before July MEI submission.
15. Plan and implement program and awards for International Human Rights Day.

Commission Membership in 2018

Jan Derry, Chair
 Marlene Robinson, Vice Chair
 Kristen Cooper, Secretary
 Drew Bucy
 Karen Kunz
 Kate Levine-Freedman
 Matt Miller
 Jacob Powers
 Dave Saville
 Judith Wilkinson

Tim Hairston – Liaison w/ State HRC
 Anne Marie Lofaso – Law School Liaison
 Don Spencer – Volunteer Program Assistant
 Kristen Jones - Volunteer
 Ramsey Kinsella - Volunteer