

City of Morgantown
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Annual Report
for
Program Year 2019



December 31, 2019

Commission Address:

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

Human Rights Commission Annual Report for 2019 and Priorities for 2020

The year 2019 has been a busy one for the Morgantown City Council in its addressing such controversial issues as the need to add additional park space, the routing of a new reservoir connecting with the water treatment plant, release of an annexation plan, and a City election. In the midst of all of this, the Human Rights Commission was able to support City Council approval of an Anti-Bullying Ordinance and two resolutions: one creating a Minority Liaisons Coordinating Council and the second, an approval of a plan for a City program entitled "Open to All." Each of the three pieces of legislation was intended to support the City's participation in the national Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index (MEI), but each proved to involve implementation steps which to date have not been completed.

The Council agenda proved to be too congested for its bringing forward the Commission's proposed Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Spring of 2019. The Commission had been working on this document since 2014 and submitted it for City Administrative review in September 2018. When the Council did have the opportunity to address it in September 2019, it was tabled due to points of controversy in strategies and need for consistency in gender identity language. The Commission received important support from new City Clerk Christine Wade and City Attorney Ryan Simonton as well as Mayor Bill Kawecky and Deputy Mayor Rachel Fetty. Jena Martin, a new Commissioner, developed a flow chart to support processing of Human Rights Complaints for which the Commission is especially grateful.

Specific accomplishments of the Commission during 2019 in relation to its set priorities for year:

Of the projected fifteen priorities set for the year, the Commission was able to fully complete four.

1. Follow-up on distribution of three additional welcome statement banners.
2. Advocate for the adoption of the Anti-Bullying Ordinance before MEI submission in July.
3. Plan and implement program and awards presentation for International Human Rights Day.
4. Advocate for increased visibility and outreach by Housing Authority in the City.

Other annual projects and new accomplishments:

1. Prepared the City submission for participation in the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index and received a rating of 75 (out of 100). The City is one of the 508 participating cities in the program.
2. Facilitated the review and amendment of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan by the City Council.
3. Presented resolution to City Council which adopted a proposed "Open to All" program to promote local tolerance of diversity by commercial organizations in the City. Program yet to be implemented due to copyright complications.
4. Presented resolution to City Council to enable the adoption of plan to establish a Minority Liaison Coordinating Council. Preliminary steps are being completed by the Human Rights Commission.
5. Presented proposed anti-bullying ordinance to City Council to promote safety of persons utilizing City services at facilities operated by the Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners, the Public Library and in the Woodburn Community Building. The ordinance has been adopted by City Council; policies in all three commissions remain unadopted.
6. Provided support for inclusionary zoning planning in the City to increase affordable housing.
7. Established Facebook social media page for expanding community awareness of Commission activities.
8. Established liaison with Morgantown Parents, Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and Morgantown Pride organizations.
9. Prepared questions for use in the League of Women Voter Candidate Forum.
10. Supported the 2019 Housing Fair.
11. Supported the planning and implementation of the WVU Conference, "Designing Across Divides."
12. Participated in Civil Rights Day at the State Legislature: "Addressing Civil Rights through Advocacy."
13. Participated in City-sponsored Community Partnership meetings for increasing participation in 2020 Census.

14. Participated in the 2019 Martin Luther King Jr. Day event organized by Community Coalition for Social Justice.
15. Developed flow chart for processing unrefereed human rights complaints. (Commissioner Jena Martin)
16. Nominated Eve Faulkes to be a recipient of an annual State Human Rights Day Award.
17. Drafted/refined resolutions for future presentation to the City Council on Gun Violence, Land Acknowledgement, and Indigenous Peoples' Day.
18. Revised "Welcome to Morgantown" statement to include blindness and veteran status.
19. Conducted election of officers including change of chairpersonship after 5 years of service.
20. Conducted preliminary review of two complaints for persons who were found to live outside of City.
21. Searched for new WVU sponsorship for the University/Community Annual Human Rights Film Program.
22. Determined that it was not viable at the present time to pursue designations of Morgantown as a Compassionate City or Human Rights City.
23. Arranged for new storage location for Human Rights Commission materials, files, and equipment.

Commission Priorities for 2020

1. Update wording on four Welcome to Morgantown banners and rack cards located throughout the City.
2. Complete changes and editing necessary for adoption of DEI Plan and supporting personnel ordinances by City Council.
3. Support 2020 Census as needed.
4. Complete implementation of "Open to All" program in the City.
5. Complete organization of Minority Liaisons Coordinating Council.
6. Complete assisting BOPARC, Public Library, and Woodburn Community Building in developing policies for anti-bullying enforcement.
7. Advocate for Law Enforcement Training for Response to persons with disabilities.
8. Advocate for community representation in planning for possible violent protests/demonstrations/rallies.
9. Organize forum on hate crimes prevention.
10. Present Land Acknowledgement resolution to City Council for adoption with WVU/community support.
11. Support reactivation of University/Community Human Rights Film Program with new sponsor.
12. Complete "Welcome to Morgantown" service information on web site.
13. Complete the Immigration Information and Referral Guide.
14. Advocate for adding specific LGBTQ liaisons with City Administration and Police Department.
15. Prepare for City submission the 2020 Municipal Equality Index survey.
16. Organize and implement the International Human Rights Day Observance and Awards.
17. Support the City housing study as invited to do so.
18. Advocate for Universal Design legislation in the State Legislature.
19. Support human rights events by local organizations such as the Community Coalition of Social Justice, NAACP, League of Women Voters, PFLAG, PRIDE, and several WVU centers for minorities.
20. Move Commission materials, files, and equipment to City Clerk's Office.

Commission Membership in 2019

Jacob Powers, Chair	Tim Hairston – Liaison w/ State HRC
Kate Levine-Freedman, Vice Chair	Anne Marie Lofaso – Law School Liaison
Kristen Cooper, Secretary	Don Spencer – Volunteer Program Associate
Drew Bucy	Diana Denise McIntosh – PFLAG Liaison
Jan Derry (Past Chair)	Ashton Cutright, Rosalyn Lauderback – PRIDE Liaisons
Ramsey Kinsella	Kristen Jones - Volunteer
Jena Martin	Judith Wilkinson - Volunteer