

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes May 15, 2014

Present: Jan Derry, Vice Chair
Michael Fike
Brian Jara
Anne Marie Lofaso
Anne Marlene Robinson-Savino, Secretary
Don Spencer, Chair
Fran Whiteman
Dave Bott, Administrative Representative
Tim Hairston – Liaison w. State HRC
Bob Jones, Research Consultant

Meeting called to order by Don Spencer, Chair, at 635 p.m.

Public Session: Lynn Castro offered to serve as a volunteer to the HRC and agreed to assist with the completion of the human rights need survey.

Communications: Don Spencer shared communications from the City Clerk which asked whether Anne Marie Lofaso, Fran Whiteman, Mike Fike and Don Spencer are willing to be reappointed to the Commission if reappointed by City Council. All agreed to stand for reappointment. Spencer also reported that there has been no action by City Council to date on the draft bylaws submitted to the Council last August. He said that he would appoint a nominating committee at the June meeting to place names in nomination for election of officers for Commission elections to be held at the July meeting.

Spencer also reported on a request from Mayor Selin that the HRC complete a survey for the national Human Rights Campaign for submission by the City in August.

Jan Derry was commended for her receipt of a Fair Housing Proclamation in April and her public remarks at the time of the presentation. City Councilor Mike Fike provided an update on the City's Home Rule application.

The communication from Kelly Kimble, Chair of Fairness WV, regarding gay-straight alliances was discussed as was a statement by Dr. Barbara Parsons of the Mon Co Board of Education on bullying in the school systems. Dr. Parsons stated that the most prevalent form of bullying relating to LGBT's is reported to be on-line. Anne Marie Lofaso asked whether there could be a bullying ordinance passed by the City Council. She agreed to discuss this possibility with Constitutional Law Professor Bob Bastress.

Appreciation was expressed for Dominion Post Goodwill City column editor Amanda DeProspero and Daily Athenaeum reporter Evelyn Merithew for their articles on the Human Rights Need Survey. The Commission also appreciated the communication of Susan Sullivan regarding the WVU Volunteer Opportunity Survey. The Commission may seek volunteer participation at intervals during the next WVU academic year.

Minutes: On a motion by Jan Derry, seconded by Fran Whiteman, the minutes of the March 20 HRC meeting were approved. Notes from the April HRC informal session were distributed. No official meeting was conducted in April due to a lack of a quorum.

Progress Reports: Dave Bott described the possibility of having a Master in Public Administration graduate student intern assigned to the Commission with the assistance of Erin Estelle, Program Coordinator. A request for a student stipend probably needs to be approved by City Council. The internship would involve 250 hours of service. The stipend could be as much as \$2,500. Don Spencer agreed to discuss the stipend with the City Manager. Anne Marie Lofaso said that a law student intern being assigned is also a possibility. The law students would work 10 hours a week at no costs. The program coordinator is Jessica Haught.

Susan Sullivan provided a report on the progress in having the City website be made Section 508 compliant. She agreed to be available for the June or July meetings of the HRC to make an in person presentation. Don Spencer reported that the plan for an annual WVU Human Rights Film Festival proposed by the HRC is still being worked on by the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. A written report is anticipated for the June meeting.

Brian Jara reported that there are already in place upper division courses offering on the history of civil rights. It is not clear whether such a course could be designed for a more general participation – including participation by the community members and access as a credit elective for high school students. Jara will continue to explore such possibilities. The possibility of working with David Hardesty on such a possibility was also suggested. Anne Robinson-Savino affirmed the value of such a course.

Human Rights Need Survey Report: Bob Jones reported on the status of the survey indicating that 423 surveys had been completed on line and over 200 by hard copies. The Commissioners reviewed together the profile of contacts with various partnering organizations and made reports on contacts with various neighborhood organizations. It was agreed by the Commissioners that it will be important to the survey's outcome that greater diversity being included in the survey's total participant population. Due to Jones's absence the plans for data processing and analysis are not yet complete. It was agreed that the date for closing receipts of surveys should be moved ahead to May 31.

New Business: Don Spencer raised concern about the need to progress in gathering information to assist the Commission with information to support future steps in preparing the Inclusive City Plan along with updating affirmative action plans. He reported that some pertinent and related information is available through the National League of Cities. Other resources which can support various elements in plan development are still needed.

Spencer cited a need for including in the development of affirmative action plans a system for profiling representation in all phases of local municipal government.

Regular Meeting Items: Due to the lateness of the hour, the Commissioner Reports, docket, and calendar sections of the agenda were abbreviated. Several Commissioners asked about the status of parking passes in the next fiscal year. The chair said that he would discuss the matter with the City Clerk. The date of the next Commission meeting will be June 19, 2014. The meeting was **adjourned** with consensus approval of the membership at 8:40 p.m.