

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes for July 16, 2015

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Fran Whiteman
Marlene Robinson-Savino, Vice Chair
Don Spencer, Secretary
Aaron Kaplansky - Research Intern

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:40 p.m. The meeting was opened with a moment of silence to honor the nine persons who had been killed by a person with prejudice and a gun at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church Bible Study in Charleston, South Carolina on June 18, 2015

Public Session: No public session attendees were present.

Communications: The commissioners noted the presence of a Confederate Flag being displayed from the bed of a pick-up truck traveling through Sabraton after the Charleston massacre. A brief discussion followed on the pervasiveness of gun allegiance, the lack of respect for society as a whole, and the need for criminal justice system reform.

Don Spencer reported that George and Mavis Lilley had attended presentations on male development at Chautauqua and would be attending the HRC meeting in August to make a brief presentation.

In other communications Jan Derry reported on her communications with the City Clerk on HRC membership replacement. Derry stated that she would send out to each commissioner a copy of the required application form so that all commissioners can assist in recruiting applicants.

Jan also reminded the Commission that recognition of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act will take place on Monday, July 26th. Derry will be on hand in Washington, D.C, at that time.

Minutes: After review and identification of needed corrections, on a motion by Fran Whiteman, seconded by Don Spencer, the minutes of the June 18, 2015 were approved pending corrections.

Priority Items: Jan Derry reported on the results of a lunch-time work session held at the NCWVIL office to discuss the results of the table on housing concerns at the City Town Hall Meeting on March 25. Don Spencer shared a proposed draft resolution relating to the results of the work session. Due to the need for expanded time to work on the THM results, Jan suggested that lunch time work sessions be continued. The next session was planned for Monday noon, August 10, at the NCWVIL office. It was recommended that Don Spencer invite Bob Jones to attend a work session to be planned relating to the table session on mental health and addictions.

Marlene Robinson – Savino reported that she will have the recording completed for the 24/7 HRC Information Line by the weekend.

Progress Reports: Fran Whiteman reported that she and Don Spencer will be meeting with the City Manager on Wednesday, July 22, to discuss the possibility for establishing LGBT liaisons with city hall and the police department. By the August 20 HRC meeting, her committee will be ready to make final recommendations regarding the submission of the 2015 Human Rights Campaign’s Municipal Equity Index by August 29, 2015.

Based on the discussion at the June HRC meeting for the need of a “just transition” for coal workers to a non-carbon economy, Don Spencer presented a proposed first draft of a resolution which can be taken to City Council for endorsement and action. The commissioners discussed the resolution and recommended that it be reviewed by Tim Hairston and Dave Bott before sending it on to Del. Mike Caputo of the UMW. Jan Derry also stated that she would share the draft document with representatives of the Workforce (development group) as well. With input received, the document can be further considered at the August HRC meeting.

Marlene Robinson-Savino reported that the Diversity Representation Committee continues to research options for preparing and improving a diversity and equity plan for the City as well as for having input on the review of the EEO plan being updated. She made a distinction between an EEO plan which specifies the legal requirements for protecting equality - and a diversity plan which works to promote and protect inclusivity in the work force and in volunteer participation on boards and commissions. The matter of making broader announcement of position vacancies available – the present practice is just using a newspaper - was discussed.

Aaron Kaplansky presented a paper indentifying the benefits of having diversity in a workforce for the Commission. This information will be utilized in preparations of the diversity and equity plan for the City.

Kaplansky also presented a sample list of courses related to civil rights offered at WVU. By consensus, the Commission agreed to place the course list on the HRC section of the City website.

Spencer reported that the next meeting on the Annual WVU Community Film Festival will be held on July 23.

New Business: Due to the number of vacancies in the Commission membership, there was some discussion on whether to proceed with the annual Commission scheduled for July meetings. An agreement was made to proceed. On a motion by Fran Whiteman, seconded by Marlene Robinson-Savino, the Commission voted to reelect the existing officers by acclamation: Jan Derry, Chair; Marlene Robinson-Savino, Vice-Chair; Don Spencer, Secretary.

It was agreed that criteria for the Human Rights Day awards should be included as new business at the August meeting.

Regular Meeting Items: The July-August calendar of human rights events was reviewed. There were no commissioner reports. The next HRC meeting was confirmed for August 20, 2015.

With the meeting being the final HRC meeting for intern Aaron Kaplansky, the commissioners thanked him warmly for his contributions to the Commission's work and wished him best of luck in his future endeavors.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Spencer, Secretary
7.24.15