

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Thursday, December 10, 2015
Special Meeting at City Library Board Room – 6:00 p.m.

International Human Rights Day

Commissioners Present:

Kristen Cooper
Jan Derry, Chair
Marlene Robinson-Savino, Vice Chair
Don Spencer, Secretary
Fran Whiteman

Tim Hairston – Liaison w/ State HRC

Meeting called to order with introductions by 28 attendees conducted by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:00 p.m. Derry provided and orientation to this history of the International Human Rights Day with a tribute to the work of Eleanor Roosevelt with the United Nations on the human rights declarations and proclamations of 1948. She went on to say that this evening's event is the first known Morgantown community celebration of the occasion and that the Human Rights Commission envisions annual continuation of the event which in the future will include presentation of awards relating to local efforts to enhance and protect human rights.

Don Spencer introduced **the guest speaker for the occasion, Dr. Jon E. Cawthorne, Dean of WVU Libraries. Dr. Cawthorne spoke on the topic, "The Lens of Human Rights through Research: Cases, NAACP and Pearl S. Buck"**. Dr. Cawthorne provided an overview of West Virginia history and heritage in relation to the NAACP and to 1938 Nobel Peace Prize in Literature recipient Pearl S. Buck and the very recent efforts to gather critical documents relating to each at West Virginia University Libraries.

Communications:

Jan Derry announced the CHAP Housing Action Workshop II scheduled for December 15 at the Pines.

Barb Howe, Secretary of the Community Coalition for Social Justice, and Tim Hairston presented plans for MLK Day, January 18, 2016 at the Met.

Progress Reports:

Marlene Robinson-Sovino provided an update of the HRC 24/7 Human Rights Phone Line as well as a report on the progress of the Commission's Diversity Committee in preparing a Diversity Plan for the City of Morgantown.

Fran Whiteman reported on the process used by the Kanawha School Board in addressing gender identity and equality issues.

Don Spencer, with Dr. John Shibley, Member of the WVU Community Human Rights Film Festival Advisory Committee present, provided a brief update on the work of the Committee and the plans for inaugurating the film festival program in February 2016.

Presentation Items: Jan Derry announced the availability for the Draft 2015 HRC Annual Report and also printed copies of the HRC Annual Human Rights Observances Calendar. She also announced that the next regular meeting of the Commission will be held on Jan. 21, 2016.

Derry recessed the meeting for refreshments contributed by the Commissioners and greeting of participants in the occasion.

Closure and adjournment took place at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Don Spencer, Secretary