

Minutes for the July 20th, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Morgantown Human Rights Commission

Location: Morgantown Public Safety Building, Training Room

Commission Members: Bonnie Brown, Cal Carlson, Annie Cronan Yorick, Danny Trejo, Zoey Vilasuso, 2 Vacancies

Ex Officio Liaisons: Tim Hairston, *State of WV Human Rights Commission*, Brian Butcher, *Morgantown City Council*

Members of the Public Present: Don Spencer

CALL TO ORDER: Annie Cronan Yorick called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm, then deferred to *Pro Tempore* Chair Bonnie Brown.

ELECTIONS:

- Nominations and Voting for the office of Chair.
 - *Pro Tempore* Chair Bonnie Brown took nominations for the Chair position. Cal Carlson nominated Annie Cronan Yorick for Chair, seconded by Danny Trejo. There was no discussion, and Annie Cronan Yorick was elected chair unanimously 5-0. The elected Chair assumed leadership for the remainder of the meeting.
- Nominations and Voting for the offices of Vice-Chair and Secretary
 - Annie Cronan Yorick opened nominations for Vice Chair. Danny Trejo nominated Bonnie Brown for Vice Chair, seconded by Cal Carlson. There was no discussion, and Bonnie Brown was elected Vice Chair unanimously 5-0.
 - Annie Cronan Yorick opened the nominations for Secretary and nominated Cal Carlson, seconded by Bonnie Brown. There was no discussion, and Cal Carlson was elected Secretary unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC PORTION

- Don Spencer shared his experiences as a former commissioner and shared knowledge about the history and past projects of the HRC.

MINUTES:

- Motion to Adopt the deferred Regular Meeting Minutes for to date: Annie Cronan Yorick will take the deferred minutes and work on them, as the prior secretary Keenan McClane resigned from the commission and there have been no responses from him.

COMMUNICATIONS & UPDATES:

- Liaison Updates
 - Tim Hairston said the quarterly State Human Rights Commission meeting would take place Thursday, July 27th, and there would be officer elections.
- Commissioner Updates
 - Bonnie Brown attended the Community Coalition for Social Justice meeting, and shared that the social and environmental justice fair would be September 17th from 2-4 pm at the Hazel Ruby McQuain Amphitheater. She also shared that plans were coming along for the Indigenous People's Day celebration, "This Land Was Already Loved", at WVU on October 9th. There would be an all-day forum on October 10th, with members of different Native American tribes at the ballrooms at WVU.
 - Danny Trejo shared that he was contacted regarding an individual at a local homeless shelter being kicked out due to being undocumented. He shared that Mountain State Justice is the group who handles immigration law in the area. He had questions regarding the Municipal Equality Index, LGBTQ+ Liaison

for the City, and general enforcement regarding city proclamations. He also voiced concerns about the cancellation of the Pride Parade and lack of police to staff it.

- Zoey Vilasuso shared her on the job experiences working with DHHR, CPS, and the judges in Monongalia County. As a commission, she wanted to know what could be done to address the shortfall of services for children in the court system. She said it would be good to go to the high schools and talked to the students about their rights.
- Cal Carlson reported that he still does not have access to a HRC Google Drive. He completed most of the work on the MEI, and will be attending the upcoming Summer Policy Institute at Fairmont State University hosted by the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy.
- Annie Cronan Yorick reported that she is trying to do CPR on the commission, would like to do things rather than talk about them, and is communicating with members. She shared about experiences from Women's Conference in Abu Dhabi.

PRIORITY BUSINESS:

- MEI - Discuss the proposed Report and vote if appropriate.
 - It was discussed with Don Spencer that the MEI required a cover letter with the mayor's signature and needed to be physically mailed to the national Human Rights Commission. The commission hoped to have the cover letter with signature and the report ready by Monday, July 24th.
- Discuss the Indigenous People's Day Declaration: This item was not discussed. No action was taken.
- Decide the questions, form, and timing for the City-wide Population Needs Study: This item was not discussed. No action was taken.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Drafting the 2022 Annual Report required by the City Charter
 - Annie Cronan Yorick asked for the members to write down things the HRC has done in the past year and bring back for the next meeting.
- Assess the need to indicate that Brian Butcher is the HRC's official City Council Liaison
 - It was confirmed that Brian Butcher was appointed by City Council to be a liaison to the HRC.

UNRESOLVED BUSINESS:

- HRC Website and Facebook Page updates
 - Updating the website is a work in progress, and the commission hopes to work with the city communications department and city clerk. Zoey Vilasuso expressed interest in assisting with the social media pages. There was also the question of where the passwords to the existing accounts are.
- HRC Records Storage and Retrieval
 - Annie Cronan Yorick said that former member Keenan McClane did work on retrieving the commission's records, but no one has heard from him since he resigned from the commission.

ADJOURN: Danny Trejo moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cal Carlson

August 13, 2023