

City of Morgantown
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

*Annual Report
for
Program Year*

2012 - 2013

Commission Address:

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

MORGANTOWN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

December 31, 2013

On July 12, 2012, the Morgantown City Council voted to approve the reconstitution of the City of Morgantown Human Rights Commission. During September 2012, City Council interviewed candidates for the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and then on October 2, 2012, Council appointed seven members to the revitalized Commission. These members were: Jan Derry, Michael Fike, John Hagan, Warren Harger, Anne Marie Lofaso, Anne Marlene Robinson-Savino, and Don Spencer.

The first meeting of the HRC was held on November 15, 2012, and the Commission has met each month on the third Thursday of the month since. In addition special meetings have been held on budget planning (1/3/13) and on preparations of resolutions (12/2/13). The first several regular meetings were devoted to orientation of the Commission to its role and its organization environment. It met with Tim Hairston, Esther Hupp, and Paul Sheridan from the State HRC in December and January; Jeff Mikorski, City Manager, also in January; David Fryson, Chief Diversity Officer at WVU, in March; John Sonnenday from the Task Force on Homelessness in April; Regina Mayola of Community Living Initiatives and Jan Derry of the Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living in July; and Police Chief Preston in August.

In addition the Commission...

1. Supported community events sponsored by city, community and university organizations which advocate for diversity, equality, and international understanding;
2. Received the appointments of David Bott as an administrative liaison for the HRC and Tim Hairston as a Council-approved ex-officio member of the Commission;
3. Interviewed an out-going City Manager to assess grounds for public concerns related to potential human rights violations in his employment with the City;
4. Established public session procedure for regular meetings and had 18 public participants making statements or requests throughout the year;
5. Maintained a docket on work completed, recommendations to be considered for HRC projects, and linkages to be established for HRC collaboration;
6. Received reports of State Human Rights Commission meetings;
7. Prepared proposed bylaws for City Council approval;
8. Worked with Eve Faulkes of the WVU Graphic Design Department to prepare for adoption of a HRC logo;
9. Was awarded \$2,500 in CDBG funding in support for a community human rights needs survey;
10. Prepared an outline for work on an comprehensive update of the City's *Affirmative Action Plan* which was approved in concept by the City Manager;
11. Received appointment of attorney Fran Whiteman to Commission membership. (John Hagan resigned in February, Warren Harger in November, due to changes in employment locations.)

12. Recruited volunteer research consultant Bob Jones to assist the Commission in planning, implementing, compiling, and reporting work related to a community need survey process;
13. Met seven times as a Commission and in committee meetings to prepare a human rights needs survey process and questionnaire;
14. Initiated work on strengthening awareness of Fair Housing Act accessibility requirements;
15. Prepared two resolutions—one in support of the employment and housing non-discrimination bill which had been introduced in the State Legislature in the 2013 session; and another in support of marriage equality which has been adopted in 17 states throughout the nation as of the end of 2013;
16. Recruited candidates to be considered by City Council for vacancies on the Commission.

The Commission's priorities adopted for 2014 include the following:

1. Seek the support of the City Council and the State Legislature for the two resolutions prepared in 2013.
2. Implement the human rights needs survey plan, compile the results and prepare a report by June 30, 2014.
3. Prepare a first inclusive city plan based on the need survey and other resources relating to community development and human rights in Morgantown and elsewhere.
4. Initiate the redrafting of the City of Morgantown *Affirmative Action Plan* and related documents, comprehensively with state-of-the-art upgrades to generate a set of documents under a title of "Sustaining Equitable Inclusivity".
5. Continue to increase awareness of Fair Housing Act in order to support initiatives which will enhance compliance w Fair Housing Act and Universal Design access standards.
6. Seek approval of Commission-prepared bylaws by City Council.
7. Partner with community organizations and WVU on program development as opportunities permit.
8. Promote a federal accessibility-standard compliant City web site.
9. Implement an annual calendar for Commission Operations.

Report Generated by Commission with Marlene Robinson-Savino, Secretary and Approved by full Human Rights Commission January 16, 2014

HRC Membership – During year ending December 31, 2013:

*Jan Derry, Vice Chair
Michael Fike
John Hagan, Vice Chair
Warren Harger
Anne Marie Lofaso
Anne Marlene Robinson-Savino, Secretary
Don Spencer, Chair
Fran Whiteman*

*Dave Bott – Administration Representative
Tim Hairston – Liaison w/ State HRC
Bob Jones – Research Consultant*