

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

February 21, 2019

Commission Members Present:

Bob Ford
Bianca Chang
Kui Zhao
Scott Markow
Peter Hwang
Hector Garcia
Joan Hash

Commission Members Absent:

Reverend Turner
Shiraz Ahmed

Staff:

Stephanie Chapple, Recording Secretary
Janssen Evelyn, Acting HRC Executive Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – Steve Charing, Howard County citizen

3. APPROVE MINUTES – January minutes approved.

4. CHAIR’S REPORT – Chair Ford welcomed the new Acting OHR Administrator Janssen Evelyn, and thanked Dr. Sands for her years of service and work on the HRC. Chair Ford thanked everyone who participated in/attended the annual MLK program and Day of Service. Commissioners Joan, Kui, Scott, Bianca attended the program on Sunday at Howard High School. Chair Ford also thanked the OHR staff who attended Human Rights Day in Annapolis. OHR staff Stephanie Chapple and Mary Campbell attended the annual event.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS - Please review reports prior to the meeting. If you have any questions regarding the reports submitted, please bring your questions to the meeting. (**Reports submitted)

- ❖ Finance and Fair Lending with Housing – Scott/Shiraz – No report.
- ❖ Legislation – Bob/Kui – No report.
- ❖ Education, Public Safety and Student Life Committee – Reverend Turner – No report.
- ❖ **HRC Awards Committee – Bianca/Hector – Per Commissioner Bianca, to date, 2 nominations have been received. One nomination for an organization, and one nomination for an individual. Voting for nominations will be held during the March meeting.
- ❖ Human Trafficking Committee – Peter, Shiraz and Joan – No report. Per Commissioners Peter and Joan, committee members will continue working on relationship building with the Howard Co. Police Department and new Police Chief to co-partner with their efforts re, HT. Peter will schedule periodic meetings with the new Police Chief in the months ahead.
- ❖ **LGBTQ Committee – Bob – Please see Bob’s written report. Per Bob, PFLAG met with the new Police Commissioner. Howard County’s first HoCo Pride event in Savage was a success. Thank you for those members who came out to support. Janssen inquired about former Roundtable discussions that were held with members of PFLAG. Bob shared that the LGBTQ Roundtable in Howard County, formed by the former County Executive, met quarterly. Anyone from the LGBTQ community who was interested in attending, was more than welcome to speak directly to the County Executive to address their concerns, and ask questions, etc. Additionally, the former County Executive would invite different leaders to join him, to address concerns that may have surfaced during that time i.e. Dept. of Corrections, Human Resources, etc.
- ❖ Aging, Disability and Health Care Committee – Bianca – No report. Opioid Training from the Howard County Health Department will be held during the March meeting.
- ❖ **HRC Goals Committee – Peter, Bianca, Reverend Turner – Commissioner Peter gave Janssen an overview of how the Goals Committee was formed. The committee’s two primary objectives are (1) Outbound – members will meet with various community groups, attend their community meetings, and begin relationship building with these groups, and (2) Inbound – invite community and faith-based leaders to the HRC meeting to let citizens know who we are, and how we can assist. Commissioner Peter will pull together a list of long-term and short-term goals the committee discussed, and share with Janssen. Janssen indicated that with the new Administration, OHR will have a renewed focus and emphasis on outreach. Janssen re-stated/re-read the Code Sec. 12.206 I.3.

- ❖ Ad-Hoc / Nominating Committee – Peter, Joan – No report. Commissioner Peter gave Janssen an overview of how this committee was formed. Janssen agreed to discuss with the new County Executive, the level of involvement needed from current members, in appointing new members to the HRC. Janssen will follow up with Jennifer Jones in the County Executive’s office regarding the process for candidates being nominated to the HRC, and how HRC members can be involved and give input during the selection. Per Commissioner Peter, the Commission recognizes that it is the prerogative of the County Executive to choose his nomination, however, HRC members would appreciate whatever involvement is needed from the Commission to participate in this process. Peter will draft this request, and forward to Janssen. Peter will also forward the link of former Commissioner Opel Jones’ testimony opposing the process of how Commissioners were/are nominated (this was during the time frame when Peter and Joan were being nominated to the HRC during the previous administration). Joan expressed her to concerns to Janssen regarding the student commissioner’s nomination, the small window of timeframe for student nominations to be forwarded, and the one-year term for each HRC student commissioner. If a student begins their term this month (Feb), or next, he/she will not have enough time to work with the Commission and complete a student project.
- ❖ Community Outreach Sub-Committee – (formed following CR-180 Study) – Peter, Hector – In response to the correspondence sent to numerous community organizations, Bob will meet with PFLAG, and Scott will meet with the Jewish Community Relations Council this month. Hector met with Leslie Salgado from FOLA (Friends of Latin America). Hector also spoke with representative from People Acting Together in Howard (PATH). Per Commissioner Scott, the Jewish Community Relations Council is a newly formed committee created within the Howard County Jewish Federation to address issues of outreach, community relations, and helping to integrate the community into the larger Howard County community. M. Campbell from the Office of Human Rights will also attend this meeting. Ms. Campbell will be speaking on behalf of Center Opposed to Violence and Extremism (COVE).



5. STUDENT REPORT – No report.

6. STAFF REPORT – Janssen submitted OHR staff report. Janssen thanked Dr. Sands for her years of service with the Office of Human Rights, as well as her years of service in civil rights. Janssen restated that the new Administration expects OHR take seriously the mandate of being a community liaison in educating the citizens of their rights and protections, as well as, inform citizens of how easy it is to access their rights. OHR will create an online presence, distribute literature at community events, faith-based locations, etc. OHR recently hired a new Intake Investigator. Mr. Ruiz is an already an asset to the office with his experience in human rights and fluency in Spanish. Janssen thanked all members who attended/participated in the annual MLK program and Day of Service. The Day of Service raised more than 6,000 lbs. of food, which was deposited to the Maryland Food Bank. Janssen asked Commissioners to please notify Stephanie or Janssen if there is an upcoming community program or event where you would like representation from the OHR Outreach staff to attend.

7. CLOSED SESSION – N/A

8. NEW BUSINESS – Re. Pre-Hearings – Commissioners Bob, Kui, Peter, Scott and Joan expressed an alternative suggestion to the per-hearing conference format. Commissioners suggest the possibility of OHR/HRC having a mandatory Settlement conference prior to the pre-hearing conference. Chair Bob spoke with Dr. Sands and HRC Legal Counsel M. Goldmeier prior to Dr. Sands’ departure. Janssen will follow up with OHR Legal Counsel, C. Peltzman.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Commissioner thanked Janssen for being so open and Per Commissioner Kui, the Census 2020 is coming up. There will a lot of outreach efforts to various communities for esp. the defined, hard to count communities such as the foreign-born, and low to moderate income communities. Per Kui, the county government probably received the Maryland State request for applying for the Census grant which is between \$25,000 and \$250,000. Non-profits are also eligible to apply. Kui suggested to Hector that FIRN should consider applying, but the deadline is 3/1. Kui will forward information to Hector. Per Chair Bob, representative from the Howard County Health Department will conduct Narcan training for all members during the next meeting. Additional information will sent to all members.

10. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.