

## Human Right Commission Minutes Regular Meeting

**DATE:** September 19, 2019

Shantell Bingham called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**ROLL CALL:** (names of members present): Sue Lewis, Shantell Bingham, Pheobe Brown, Melvin Grady, Andy Orban, Catherine Spear, Olivia Gabbay, Jeanette Abi-Nader, Ernest Chambers, Robert Woodside, Elliott Brown, Sue Lewis, Ann Smith, Kathryn Laughon (arrived after roll call)

*\*Please note, the summarized notes presented below are recorded in real time and are not concise quotes from the correlated speaker. Please review the posted audio recording for specific language. The HRC intends to get word-for-word transcript meeting notes for accessibility purposes in the future.*

### **ANNOUCEMENTS**

Charlene

- Fall VAHR postponed until after elections
  - November 16<sup>th</sup> is proposed date
- Charlottesville Twelve Celebration
  - Saturday, Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>, 11am to 1pm
  - Buford Middle School

**MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC** (Include names of people who spoke and their concern or comment)

None.

(Three UVA Nursing Students were in attendance for observations)

### **COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

None.

### **REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

- Motion to accept (Commissioner name): Anne Smith
- Seconded by (Commissioner name): Andy Orban
- Vote Record
  - # In favor: 11
  - # Opposed: 0
  - # Abstained: 2

## **BUSSINESS MATTERS**

### **1. Ordinance Amendment Update**

- a. Charlene
  - i. Spoke with John Blaire regarding ordinance amendments
  - ii. Mr. Blaire did not see any major concerns with the amendments
  - iii. Mr. Blaire asked if HRC wanted it on the Council agenda on 10/7/19 or 10/23/19
  - iv. City Council will discuss and potentially vote, the first meeting will likely be a first reading
- b. HRC Commissioners discuss and agree upon 10/7/19

### **2. Human Rights Commission Community Survey**

- a. Charlene
  - i. HRC members volunteered
    1. Kathryn L.
    2. Catherine S.
    3. Elliott
    4. Jeanette
    5. Lyndele
    6. Olivia
- b. Commissioners discuss possible dates for meeting
  - i. Oct. 8 works for most
    1. Kathryn will be out of the country
  - ii. 12:30pm to 1:30pm lunch meeting
  - iii. Meet at the Office of Human Rights
  - iv. This will be a meeting to create a draft of the survey and talk about process
  - v. Lunch preferences
    1. Elliott notes that she does not eat meat
    2. Charlene will pick up sandwiches from Bagby's

### **3. Chair Update**

#### **a. Draft Letter Regarding Gun Legislation**

- i. Shantell
  1. Notes that Rob abstained on the vote to write this letter
    - a. He reiterated this when he noted that his name was on the sidebar of the letter where HRC members were listed
  2. Letter drafted (attached) based on Delegate Toscano's primary legislative points
  3. Seeks to present this to legislature
- ii. Rob
  1. Asks if his name should be removed because of his abstention
    - a. Ann
      - i. Suggests it is standard practice for names of all group members to remain on letterhead regardless of position on a particular issue
    - b. Rob
      - i. Expresses no concern with his name remaining on the letter
- iii. Elliott

1. Notes her name has two “t’s”
  2. Notes Olivia’s last name has changed
- iv. Catherine
1. Asks if this letter is a draft
    - a. Shantell
      - i. Yes
      - ii. Draft is on Google Drive and HRC can submit edits
- v. Pheobe
1. Suggests having specific notes about each bill that identify the issues that HRC members care about pertaining to each bill
- vi. Sue
1. Notes that HRC did not have any concerns about any of the bills on the letter after previous discussion
  2. Does not feel it would be proper to call out specific issues within the bills
  3. Correction on second paragraph – eliminate apostrophe on “Right’s”
- vii. Catherine
1. Notes that “pertinent” could be replaced by “critical” to show emphasis
    - a. Sue
      - i. Suggests “important”
- viii. Sue
1. Add Delegate Toscano’s name at the top of the letter address
  2. Make sure to refer to him at Delegate Toscano in the letter
- ix. Jeanette
1. Asks if HRC needs to present the letter to Council before submitting
    - a. Andy
      - i. Asks if that would add another step
    - b. Jeanette
      - i. Not for Council approval but just to inform them it is being sent
      - ii. We could Cc them
    - c. Shantell
      - i. Concurs with Cc’ing Council
- x. Shantell
1. Asks HRC if they would like to dedicate more time to gun violence issues
    - a. Kathryn
      - i. Deeply committed to the issue personally
      - ii. Maybe not a focus for the HRC
      - iii. Other issues are more within HRC’s ability to make change
        1. Example: Protections and accommodations for people who are victims of domestic violence for people to have time off from work to recover from the violence
    - b. Ann
      - i. Clarifies, that the example that Kathryn shares is separate from that of gun issues
    - c. Charlene
      - i. In the folder from the retreat, there is a legislative agenda

- ii. Council is getting ready to work on the legislative agenda next month
  - iii. HRC can review and make recommendations to Council
  - iv. She will send out by email
- d. Shantell
  - i. Feels that taking on issues needs to include public outreach and mass campaigns
  - ii. Asks if community organizing been part of the HRC's past work around the legislative agenda
    - 1. Charlene
      - a. The HRC as a group has shared their views
      - b. The HRC passes on recommendations to Council
      - c. The HRC has not done community organizing
    - 2. Shantell
      - a. Asks if that is enough to make change
      - b. Wonders if getting broader public support would be beneficial
      - c. Feels like HRC could do more
- e. Rob
  - i. Notes that HB4003 is not on letter
    - 1. Group
      - a. Notes that Del. Toscano already sponsored that bill, and it was not passed by the General Assembly
- f. Pheobe
  - i. Clarifies that what is being asked by Shantell is if the HRC should participate in community engagement
  - ii. She feels passionate about doing something about gun safety
  - iii. She notes there are many organizations and groups doing work on this
  - iv. She feels like we could facilitate a community event with other orgs that do this along with candidates
    - 1. Shantell
      - a. Suggests signing on to campaigns or letters that are launched by other orgs like the HRC did for the CLIHC letter
- g. Sue
  - i. Revisits the broader question of whether the HRC should have a stronger focus on community organizing
  - ii. Suggests that there is currently nothing in the ordinance that suggests this as HRC's role
- h. Kathryn
  - i. A

- ii. Suggests that while gun violence may not be a focus of the HRC, it is within the realm of human rights, as it affects certain people more than others
  - i. Ann
    - i. Suggests a PSA from the HRC about its position on gun violence
    - ii. Feels this might help inspire other groups to act
  - j. Shantell
    - i. Agrees that PSAs and newspaper articles might fit the bill
  - k. Charlene
    - i. She has heard in the past that awareness raising is an interest within the HRC
    - ii. HRC can decide what to put energy into
    - iii. OHR will support
  - l. Elliot
    - i. Likes the idea of organizing around whatever issue the HRC chooses to focus on and bringing power in numbers
- b. Sundial for Charlottesville Twelve**
  - i. Shantell
    - 1. Took feedback from last meeting around the cost of the project
      - a. Will draft resolution with more concrete numbers
      - b. Local artist creating a mock up now

#### **4. OHR Staff Report**

##### **a. Todd Niemeier Staff Report**

- i. Service provision data
  - 1. No new numbers to share this month
  - 2. Still entering data for July
  - 3. Notes that there is has been a steady influx of individuals seeking assistance
- ii. Investigations
  - 1. One active investigation
    - a. Public accommodation allegation on the basis of race
    - b. Should be completed before November
    - c. Seven more witness interviews to complete
- iii. Outreach
  - 1. Service provision
    - a. Tabling at the CRANU Festival
    - b. Shantell was also present for Charlottesville Food Justice Network
  - 2. Education & Awareness
    - a. Spoke to Richmond Human Rights Commission on 9/14/19
      - i. Talked about intake and investigation process
      - ii. Notes that Richmond HRC has not yet formalized its enforcement procedures in the ordinance
    - b. Refugee Resettlement Simulation
      - i. Conducted one volunteer training on 9/11/19
      - ii. Held a live simulation on 9/16/19 at Northside Library
  - 3. Facilitation & Leadership
    - a. Community Research Review Board
      - i. In process of drafting MOUs
      - ii. Focus is on resident control

- b. Housing
    - i. OHR involvement driven by number of people who request assistance with housing
    - ii. Working with Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) and other organizations that do housing navigation
      - 1. Discussing creation of a housing hub
        - a. Navigation to affordable housing
        - b. Case management
        - c. Physical location for people to seek services
  - iv. Ways HRC members might want to be involved
    - 1. CSRAP voucher advocacy
      - a. HRC previously drafted a resolution
      - b. May want to start thinking now if want to advocate for this again for FY2021
    - 2. Evaluation of Event Participation
      - a. Seeking potential volunteers from HRC to help collect evaluation forms
        - i. Ernest
          - 1. Asks if a paper survey is necessary
            - a. Todd
              - i. Has found better results with in-person paper surveys rather than online surveys after the event
        - ii. Pheobe
          - 1. Suggests passing surveys out at the beginning of the event
          - 2. Also willing to attend events to help
        - iii. Charlene
          - 1. Would appreciate having assistance with evaluation when focusing on multiple tasks at events
          - 2. Data collection on this would be valuable when reporting to Council
          - 3. Suggests the HRC Survey Ad Hoc Committee might discuss different strategies depending on the event
            - i. Paper vs. online
      - iv. Todd
        - 1. Notes there are three existing survey templates
          - a. Service provision
          - b. Event participation
          - c. Collaboration
        - 2. All three exist as both paper and online versions
3. Shantell
  - a. Regarding CSRAP advocacy
    - i. Asks if the advocacy process would change as budget process changes
    - ii. Refers to City departments starting at zero
      - 1. Charlene
        - a. The CSRAP is funded by the City and the funds are granted to CRHA for administration
        - b. This money is appropriated at Council's discretion

- c. Funding comes from the Charlottesville affordable housing fund

**b. Charlene Green Staff Report**

- i. HRC involvement
  - 1. Notes the possibility of upcoming facilitation training (no dates yet)
    - a. Refugee Resettlement Simulation
    - b. Dialogue on Race
- ii. Office of Equity and Inclusion
  - 1. Mike Murphy will report to Council on October 7
    - a. Will report on proposed staffing needs
    - b. Will share potential vision for office structure/function
    - c. No indication yet how this might involve or affect the OHR
  - 2. Olivia
    - a. Asks if Council will be voting on anything regarding the Office of Equity and Inclusion
      - i. Charlene
        - 1. Thinks this is just an information session
    - b. Suggests HRC should follow this closely
      - i. Offers to share a report from August 19 about the office
  - 3. Charlene
    - a. Notes that the way Mike Murphy describes how the office should be staffed may speak to how the OHR may be involved
    - b. Notes that recent restructuring of City Departments by Dr. Richardson (new City Manager) places the OHR under the Department of Human Services instead of the City Manager's Office
      - i. The OHR now reports to Mike Murphy as the Deputy City Manager who oversees the Department of Human Services
- iii. Unity Days
  - 1. Almost concluded
  - 2. Included 60 to 70 events
- iv. Racial and Ethnic History Presentations
  - 1. Currently leading 5 to 6 per month
    - a. Bus tours
    - b. Presentations in classrooms or other venues
  - 2. Offers the opportunity to attend to HRC members
  - 3. Several HRC members express interest (no names noted)
- v. PRIDE festival
  - 1. OHR hosted several films out of City Hall
  - 2. Did not table at festival because OHR was asked to pay a fee
  - 3. Is suggesting that when festivals ask for \$ from City, the contract should include the opportunity to have 1 or 2 tables from City offices at the event

**WORK SESSION**

**1. Ad Hoc Committee updates**

**a. Policy Review**

- i. Catherine
  - 1. No updates at this time
- ii. Charlene

1. Asks if there is another opportunity for the policy committee to meet
  - a. Catherine
    - i. Could have another meeting
    - ii. Looking at three key policies
    - iii. HRC decided to focus only on biased-based policing
    - iv. Decided to re-draft and she volunteered to take the lead on creating the draft
      1. Can commit to writing next week
      2. Could workshop the draft at the next Ad Hoc meeting
      3. Could the present it to HRC
  - b. Shantell
    - i. Expresses her trust in Catherine’s judgement on this
  - c. Catherine
    - i. Suggests a Doodle poll for the second week of October
    - ii. Will post an updated draft by the end of next week (Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>)
  - d. Charlene
    - i. We can post a poll for Week of 7<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> of October
  - e. Elliot
    - i. Wants to be more supportive of this committee in a month or so
    - ii. Asks why HRC members cannot post their own doodle polls
      1. Charlene
        - a. City email accounts are guaranteed to reach all commissioners
      2. Elliot
        - a. Asks that polls go out at least two weeks in advance

**b. Community Engagement**

- i. Pheobe
  1. Met with the Independence Resource Center (IRC)
    - a. Asked HRC to set up the script for the PSA before they recruit spokespeople
    - b. Suggested other organizations to contact
    - c. Asked if she should type up a script then bring to the committee meeting
      - i. Likes the “Talk to Me” approach (referring to a particular video style)
        1. Melvin
          - a. Agrees with this approach
    - d. She will set up a Doodle Poll are send to Todd
    - e. Once the committee and HRC approves the script can reach out to other organizations to seek spokespeople
      - i. Charlene
        1. Asks what organizations IRC suggested contacting
          - a. Pheobe
            - i. Region Ten
            - ii. The Arc
            - iii. The Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
            - iv. Virginia Institute of Autism



- ii. Ann
    - 1. Suggests a video she saw on YouTube posted by an person with autism who creates his own music
- 2. Asks if HRC wants to explore a PSA for gun violence
  - a. Asks if we should contact other organizations for more information
    - i. Catherine
      - 1. Supports letter to Del. Toscano
      - 2. Suggests sticking to plan to getting two major things done
        - a. Biased-based policing
        - b. Disability awareness PSA
      - 3. We could then consider other paths after these are complete
    - b. Phoebe
      - i. Brought up second PSA given that these efforts may take time
      - ii. Notes that Jim Herndon at IRC felt like it would not be difficult to get people to read the script for the Disability Awareness PSA
      - iii. Feels like we may be able to start thinking about next PSA opportunity and gun violence might be a good option given relevance to current events
    - c. Kathryn
      - i. Agrees it is an important issue
      - ii. Feels like other PSAs would be more in line with HRC
        - 1. Example: Public awareness around the core work of the HRC itself might be more urgent, as she noted that people do not generally know much about the HRC or what it does
      - iii. Asks what an HRC PSA about gun violence would be asking people to do
    - d. Melvin
      - i. Also agrees that gun violence is an important issue
      - ii. Agrees with Kathryn that PSAs around gun violence may not be appropriate for the HRC
    - e. Ann
      - i. Thinks that unless we do a PSA about the HRC letter, the public will know that the HRC has even submitted a letter of support
      - ii. Asks about the sense of urgency for trying to increase public awareness about the HRC in general: She did not see it as an urgent issue
    - f. Olivia
      - i. Asks for clarification about the PSA
        - 1. A press release or actual public service announcement?
        - 2. Group response
          - a. Announcement
      - ii. Suggests a press release might be a better way to get the word out about the letter of support
        - 1. Assumes a newspaper would pick up a press release quickly and easier to produce
        - 2. A PSA seems a little more involved
    - g. Melvin
      - i. Is not sure what a PSA would even look like
    - h. Pheobe

- i. Asks about calling a meeting about what a PSA could look like
  - ii. She feels like it could be very basic
    - 1. Sue
      - a. PSAs are usually about things that are going to happen rather than things that did happen
  - iii. Suggests the potential of gathering statements and testimony from other organizations and affected community members
- i. Olivia
  - i. Suggests tabling this conversation for an Ad Hoc meeting
- j. Charlene
  - i. Recommends reaching out to Moms Demand Action
    - 1. Could invite them to the next Ad Hoc
    - 2. See how they might see collaborating on an awareness campaign
  - ii. Gun violence PSA may not look the same as the disability PSAs
  - iii. May be a good time to focus on it after the next VAHR meeting
- k. Shantell offers a summary of the conversation
  - i. Catherine shared that we need to focus on the bias-based policing
  - ii. Appreciates Pheobe's energy around gun violence
  - iii. Notes Kathryn's interest in advocacy for victims of domestic violence
  - iv. Offers to start a Google doc to collect key issues important individual Commissioners for consideration by the HRC
- l. Catherine
  - i. Notes that we chose disability awareness because someone brought to public comment
  - ii. Suggests including the items from the big sheets of paper from the HRC work session in May
  - iii. Also notes that the more complicated the PSA (especially for accessibility) we need to confirm the studio's ability to do this and consider the time it may take to complete
- m. Shantell
  - i. Asks about the timing of the letter and the VAHR meeting
  - ii. Notes that General Assembly is voting on the gun legislation on November 19th
    - 1. Charlene
      - a. Suggests Shantell contact Curtis about how VAHR can sign on to the letter
      - b. Notes a video from Sand Hill Promise on Facebook about kids returning to school in the shadow of gun violence and how that affects their experience
        - i. HRC members could choose to share this as a means of increasing awareness
- n. Pheobe
  - i. Asks if HRC wants to plan and meeting to discuss or table for a future time
- o. Andy
  - i. Suggests pursuing a press release instead of a PSA

- p. Group agrees about press release
- 3. Rob
  - a. Ask Kathryn and Catherine about outreach to UVA student groups that might want to be ex officio members
    - i. Kathryn
      - 1. They have both reached out to various groups but none have responded by coming yet
      - 2. Asked why UVA in particular and why not PVCC or CHS students
        - a. Others agree
        - b. Ann offers to contact someone at PVCC
    - ii. Charlene
      - 1. Notes that the reason UVA was involved was because a student group (Minority Rights Coalition) asked to be a part of HRC
      - 2. Students cannot have a voting role, as they are not appointed by City Council
      - 3. Does not have to be a UVA person
      - 4. The resolution that the HRC voted on to invite the MRC was about information sharing
    - iii. Sue
      - 1. Asks about Doodle poll for the bylaws ad hoc committee
        - a. Phoebe
          - i. Notes that a Doodle poll was sent
          - ii. Notes that only she and Rob attended
          - iii. Meeting happened on 8/6/19
      - 2. Notes she did not see the Doodle poll
        - a. Todd
          - i. Asks if there was a technical issue to look into regarding people not receiving the poll
        - b. Group confirms that the Doodle poll was received
    - iv. Charlene
      - 1. Regarding Sue's concern, suggests waiting to see what Council says about the proposed ordinance amendments then meeting to discuss further
    - v. Sue
      - 1. Asks if there can be discussion of what was done with the bylaws
    - vi. Charlene
      - 1. Clarifies that there has only been a meeting about the ordinance and not about the bylaws
      - 2. Suggests waiting to address changes to the bylaws until Council discusses the amendments to the ordinance

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. Commissioners comment on meetings and other events attended since the last monthly meeting.
  - a. Jeanette
    - i. Attended the Charlottesville Twelve event on September 8<sup>th</sup>

1. Was a powerful event
2. Notes that some of the same students will be at the event on Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>

**MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC** (Include names of people who spoke and their concern or comment)

None.

**COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

None.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:44 PM.

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. Shantell
  - a. On letter to General Assembly regarding gun legislation
    - i. Correct the spelling of Elliott's first name: Elliott Brown
    - ii. Correct Olivia's last name: Olivia Gabbay
    - iii. Remove apostrophe in "Right's" in second paragraph
    - iv. Replace "pertinent" with "critical" or "important" in second paragraph
2. Charlene
  - a. Email Council's legislative agenda to HRC
3. Olivia
  - a. Share a report from August 19 regarding the Office of Equity and Inclusion
4. Catherine
  - a. Write an updated draft of the Biased-based Policing Policy
    - i. Post draft on Google Drive by 9/27/19
  - b. Create a Doodle poll for the next Policy Ad Hoc Committee meeting
    - i. Todd will share the Doodle poll with the HRC once created
    - ii. Todd will post Public Notice once date is selected
5. Policy Ad Hoc Committee
  - a. Workshop Catherine's Biased-based Policing Policy draft at next meeting
6. Pheobe
  - a. Create a Doodle poll or the next Community Engagement Ad Hoc Committee meeting
    - i. Todd will share the Doodle poll with the HRC once created
    - ii. Todd will post Public Notice once date is selected
  - b. Invite Mom's Demand Action to a future Community Engagement Ad Hoc meeting to talk about public messaging about gun violence
7. Shantell
  - a. Create a Google doc to collect issue ideas for future consideration by the HRC
8. Unassigned
  - a. Consider drafting a press release regarding the HRC letter of support to Delegate Toscano regarding upcoming gun legislation
9. Ann
  - a. Will send an email to a contact at PVCC regarding student ex officio representation on the HRC



**Human Rights Commission AGENDA**  
**September 19, 2019**  
**Neighborhood Development Services Conference Room, City Hall**  
**7:00pm**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC** Public comment permitted for those who sign up before the meeting (limit 3 minutes per speaker) and at the end of the meeting on any item

**COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

**MINUTES\***

**BUSINESS MATTERS**

1. Ordinance Amendment update
2. Human Rights Commission Community Survey
3. Chair update
  
5. OHR staff report, Todd Niemeier and Charlene Green

**WORK SESSION**

1. Ad Hoc Committee updates
  - a. Policy Review
  - b. Community Engagement

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Human Rights Commissioners comment on meetings and other events attended since the last monthly meeting

**MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

**COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

**\*ACTION NEEDED**

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## City of Charlottesville Human Rights Commission

**Commissioners**  
Shantell Bingham  
*Chair*

Susi Wilbur  
*Vice Chair*

Susan W. Lewis  
*Parliamentarian*

Jeanette Abi-Nader

Idil Aktan

Elliot Brown

Pheobe Brown

Ernest Chambers

Kathryn Laughon

Andrew Orban

Catherine Spear

Matthew Tennant

Lyndele Von Schill

Robert Woodside

Melvin Grady

Olivia Patton

Ann J. Smith

September 15, 2019

Pocahontas Building, Room E210  
900 East Main Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
(804) 698-1057

Dear Mr. Toscano,

The City of Charlottesville Human Rights Commission would like to thank you for your diligent efforts towards gun control in the state of Virginia. To date, you have already sponsored and co-sponsored two key bills ([HB 4009](#), and [HB 4003](#)) that will promote safer communities in Virginia.

The Human Right's Commission has been following the work of the VA State Crime Commission as well as other conversations across the state. We feel that it's pertinent to implement common sense gun laws and ask you to support the passing of the following bills on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019;

- [HB 4015](#) Firearm transfers; criminal history record information checks, penalty.
- [HB 4004](#) Handguns; limitation on purchases, exceptions, penalty.
- [HB 4020](#) Firearms; purchase, possession, etc., by prohibited persons, surrender or transfer of firearms, etc.
- [HB 4021](#) Assault firearms, certain firearm magazines, trigger activators, & silencers; prohibiting sale, etc.
- [HB 4005](#) Firearms, ammunition, etc.; control by localities by governing possession, etc., within locality.

We thank you for your service and commitment to safety in Virginia.  
Sincerely,

Shantell Bingham, Chair  
Human Rights Commission  
106 5th St NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902  
[shantellbingham@gmail.com](mailto:shantellbingham@gmail.com)

Human Rights Commission  
Charlottesville Office of Human Rights  
106 5th St NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902