



**Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Committee Engagement Committee Meeting  
October 14, 2021  
Virtual/Electronic Meeting  
7:00 pm**

Public link to meeting rebroadcasts on Boxcast: <https://boxcast.tv/channel/vabajtzeuyv3iclqx1a>

Public link to HRC documents on Box: <https://app.box.com/s/xy3wnn2s1tj8h7trkknvd79bipyxezy>

**1. WELCOME**

- a. CALL TO ORDER
  - i. Chair, Jessica Harris, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
  - i. Lyndele Von Schill
  - ii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
  - iii. Jessica Harris
- c. MISSION (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

**2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
  - i. None
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
  - i. None

**3. MINUTES**

- a. Review of minutes from 09/02/21
  - i. Vote
    1. In favor: 1
    2. Opposed: 0
    3. Abstained: 2

**4. BUSINESS MATTERS**

- a. Chair update
  - i. None
- b. OHR Staff report
  - i. None

**5. WORK SESSION**

- a. Next steps for plain language document work and Resolution A21-1
  - i. Is needed because the formal language that is normally used in city documents is not equitable or accessible for the general public
    1. There is a federal law saying that public documents should be put into easily understandable language, but apparently, it is no longer in effect in Virginia or the City of Charlottesville
  - ii. Lyndele proposes writing a plain language version of the legal documents HRC is required to create from now on (and also possibly

- going back to several documents already published)
    1. Could be in a flyer form—short and simple
    2. Similar to an executive summary
    3. Lyndele volunteers to do drafting, which the Commission would then approve and offer feedback on; draft would then be posted on website with link to original resolution
  - iii. City requires the official document, but HRC is free to create plain language companion documents to the official ones
    1. It is easier to create plain language documents first
    2. Ideally, Lyndele would like to have the plain language document posted on the website, link the denser version, and have the flyer version available, as well
  - iv. Committee member suggests that the plain language document should have a link to the dense version once it is available
    1. Also suggests that in the official version under “Be it further resolved” regarding the Chair taking action on behalf of the Commission, the Chair at least notifies Commission of urgent actions
  - v. Committee member asks Todd if it is necessary to explain why a plain language document is necessary in the formal language document
    1. Cross-referencing is helpful; there could be something like “Be it further resolved that we have a commitment to plain language rendering of all documents
- b. A21-1 work
- i. Committee Chair asks if there should be a part inserted about the Commission Chair giving notice before taking action
  - ii. Could be on a scale, like public meeting vote, input by mail, and the Chair acting on behalf and informing the Commission
  - iii. Add a two-part “When possible, the Chair gives Commissioners 24-48 hours’ notice before taking action on behalf of the Commission” to the resolution
  - iv. Jeanette and Lyndele can draft this now to add to the resolution which will be brought up at the next regular meeting
    1. Can workshop it at this meeting or email it to Todd to drop it into the resolution for review
  - v. Also add bit about Vice-Chair if Chair is unavailable?
    1. Possibly not necessary, but this is easy to add
- c. Plain language next steps, continued
- i. Chair suggests adding the definition of plain language to the flyer
    1. **Lyndele can draft this**
  - ii. Lyndele’s friend Shelley is a plain language expert and would be willing to do a workshop
    1. Plain language is an official term/system used in the federal government
  - iii. **Todd will add this change into the document and put it into the next regular meeting’s agenda**
    1. Will go in formal language A21-1 document under “Be it further resolved”; plain language version will go in in plain language document under “We commit to being a strong advocate...”

- iv. **Todd will also add the reciprocal statement about providing plain language documents to the formal language document**
  - d. New business
    - i. Chair expresses interest in creating some kind of document that clearly describes the process of how OHR files complaints
      - 1. OHR staff says that a PSA (quick cartoon-like presentation?) about what OHR and HRC generally do would be helpful
      - 2. Chair says a flow chart would be helpful, too
      - 3. Lyndeale says this project could recruit someone from UVA or Piedmont
        - a. She is willing to reach out to find someone to create a video
        - b. A graphic art or multimedia student, maybe?
      - 4. Also a good conversation to have with Communications
      - 5. Start with the basics, like the definition of human rights
      - 6. Maybe a minute-long video
        - a. Explain how local law and federal law interact
        - b. Provide examples and resources
      - 7. There is a human rights definition that is much broader than where the OHR and HRC can legally work—this is an important distinction to explain to the general public
        - a. Inherent vs legal human right
        - b. Explain what human rights protections looks like at the local, state, national, international level
        - c. Infographic would help explain this
      - 8. It would be helpful to explain under which domains the OHR and HRC can operate, as it can be confusing
      - 9. **Lyndeale can work on the ordinance describing what happens when a client files a complaint**
  - e. Template document for public statements
    - i. Jeanette asks if Attachment 5 is correctly completed
    - ii. This document works well as a template
    - iii. First part reads similarly to a plain-language resolution
    - iv. “Purpose” through “Support” is largely captured in the resolution
    - v. Get rid of the first page
    - vi. Could attach this template to the resolution (under another “Be it further resolved”) to explain that when a Chair does issue a public statement, they will use this particular format?
      - 1. Probably not necessary to attach it to the resolution; could just be a document to reference as needed
    - vii. Might want to reference relevant resolution(s) in the template to show where the Commission is deriving its authority
      - 1. Could do this in the first paragraph after “In alignment with this mission,…”
      - 2. Jeanette adds in this wording to the document
    - viii. Make sure it is simple plain language
  - f. Todd is keeping a Word document of the drafted statements from this meeting for future reference
  - g. Next steps regarding Committee’s proposed engagement plan

- i. Jeanette and Jessica talked about this several months ago, but have not gotten a chance to revisit
    - ii. Will talk about this during the next meeting
  - h. Chair asks to discuss approval for social media during the next meeting
    - i. The old Facebook got deleted, so the Commission will be starting from scratch
    - ii. Commissioner emails are still in the works

**6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
  - i. None
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
  - i. None

**7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

- a. None

**8. NEXT STEPS**

- a. **General Next Steps**
  - i. **Present the altered formal language Resolution A21-1, plain language version, plain language flyer, and template to the next HRC regular meeting**
- b. **Lyndele**
  - i. **Draft plain language flyer with new bit about plain language**
    - 1. **Send to Todd**
  - ii. **Work on document describing the process of filing a complaint with OHR**
- c. **Todd**
  - i. **Add changes about plain language to all of the documents (formal language A21-1, plain language version, and flyer) and put in agenda for next HRC regular meeting**
    - 1. **Add the reciprocal statement about providing plain language documents to the formal language document**
- d. **Next meeting**
  - i. **Proposed engagement plan**
  - ii. **Approval for social media**

**9. ADJOURN**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm