



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Community Engagement Committee Meeting
November 4, 2021
Virtual/Electronic Meeting
1:00 pm**

Public link to meeting rebroadcasts on Boxcast: <https://boxcast.tv/channel/vabajtzeuyv3iclkx1a>

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 1:06 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Lyndele Von Schill
 - ii. Andrew Orban
 - iii. Jessica Harris
 - iv. Kathryn Laughon
- 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 10/14/21
 - i. Motion to approve
 1. Lyndele
 - ii. Second
 1. Jessica
 - iii. Vote
 1. In favor: 2
 2. Opposed: 0
 3. Abstained: 2

4. WORK SESSION

- a. Draft Resolution A21-1
 - i. Approved the changes described in the comments; now Lyndele needs to make these final changes in a new document
 1. Not yet finished with official version, so need to finish that before making changes to plain language version
 2. **Lyndele will send the finished version to the entire Commission to be voted upon at the next regular meeting**
 - ii. After approving the plain language version of this document, there are

- plans to make plain language versions of other documents, as well
 - 1. Include flyer (to use as a future model) and plain language version for approval, as well
- iii. Hyperlinks to other documents will not be included, as if the location of the other documents change the links will break
- iv. Could write resolution in plain language that all resolutions going forward (and past ones, potentially) will be drafted in plain language
 - 1. Then, it would not be necessary to recognize the plain-language counterpart at the bottom of every formal-language document
 - 2. Written like other resolutions
 - 3. **Lyndele can draft this plain language resolution**
- b. August 11-12, 2017 recognition during 2022
 - i. Ashley wanted feedback regarding the memo sent over the summer about the City's five-year remembrance of August 2017 events and recognition of commemorative dates and months throughout the year
 - ii. There is no funding for this currently, though Todd can look at the OHR budget
 - iii. Committee Chair asks if there has been any other event since August 2017
 - 1. 2019 Unity Days: Charlene worked with City Manager's Office and Communications to gather ideas from community members
 - a. They had funding for various initiatives; Todd has the calendar of the Unity Days events
 - iv. Todd would not be able to put on a large event, so it would have to be a feasible initiative for people involved
 - 1. Commissioner says Ashley requests feedback more than putting on events
 - v. Commissioner says she would rather the City apologize and provide more transparency than commemorate this 2017 event
 - 1. Another Commissioner agrees and says she would rather the City address the lingering effects of August 2017, such as the ongoing attacks on Black officials
 - 2. Commissioners want the City to specifically address salary equity, grievance policies, housing, non-racist zoning, more functional PCRB
 - 3. Commissioner says the City can explain how the events of 2017 were a catalyst for current local relations now, but they should accompany this with concrete action
 - a. And continued reparations
 - vi. Chair asks how Commissioners should share their thoughts
 - 1. OHR staff recommends bringing the committee's thoughts to the entire Commission, then allowing the HRC Chair to issue a response
 - vii. Ashley included some ideas of her own in the memorandum that Commissioners could also comment on
 - viii. Commissioner summarizes that the Commission is not interested in a commemorative event; it is interested in action
 - 1. This is one of Ashley's suggestions ("education and outreach on systemic racism, e.g., rebooting the Commission's Dialogue on

- Race”)
- a. Pursuing Dialogue on Race reboot could be effective as long as project organizers consult Charlottesville’s Black residents
 - b. Ashley also asks if there is any budgetary request with the Commission’s recommendations
 - i. Could recommend that Council fund something
- ix. Chair does not want it to be commemorative; she would rather give a voice to those who do not have one, potentially through the Dialogue on Race
- 1. There is lots of documentation about the original Dialogue on Race in 2007; it is the reason for HRC’s creation
 - a. Task forces, drafting Human Rights Ordinance, other initiatives, etc.
 - b. City of Promise is another outcome
- x. Commissioner says second iteration of the Dialogue on Race was less productive in that there were no programs that came out of it
- 1. Todd and interns could look through Charlene’s old files on paper and computer
 - 2. Some written history on the timeline of the Dialogue on Race could be helpful
 - 3. There was little regular meeting of the task forces by the time Todd arrived—could be a good time for a reboot
 - 4. There is a Facebook page that captures some of the publicly-available work
- xi. Commissioner says listening to the Black community and the Dialogue on Race may be different things
- 1. She has heard community members express that Charlottesville does not need another Dialogue on Race, as it was structured to bring white people into the conversation
 - 2. Now, the city needs action, not conversation
 - 3. Is interested in outreach to silenced communities rather than a formal Dialogue on Race
- xii. Chair agrees and proposes bringing back the Dialogue on Race, but with more action and engaging with communities
- 1. Commissioner suggests having a different name so as not to closely associate the different versions
 - a. Says biggest problem is getting white people to listen to the Black community, rather than the Black community not speaking up
 - b. Expresses strong support for bystander training and says the Commission can insist we change the way we listen to people
- xiii. Kathryn met with Ashley to talk about bystander intervention
- 1. Ashley is planning to organize it for City employees and is hopeful that what she plans will be available via Zoom to the general public, as well
 - 2. Commissioners can be invited
 - 3. Organizations like Hollaback! provide this training

- xiv. Chair says a clever poster or other creative way to get the Black community's voices to Council would be more effective/engaging than a letter
 - 1. Summarizes the Commission would like to recommend to Ashley more of a call to action to City Council; wants the Commission to hold them accountable but also reflect what the Black community actually wants
 - 2. Commissioner says some kind of community event where people can come and contribute to some kind of poster or other visual could be effective
 - a. Don't just insist people get the training, but also use it
- xv. Chair asks if Ashley herself is going to take on these projects
 - 1. She is currently just brainstorming
- c. Recognition of commemorative dates and months
 - i. Ashley's ideas look good
 - ii. OHR staff says Commission could, in their recommendations, write a letter to Council advocating for funding
 - 1. She would like feedback from the Commission on *how* the events might take place while being meaningful and not just tokens
 - iii. Chair says she recommends all of the things listed
 - 1. Mix of explaining significance and amplifying a community's voices, and explaining how one can support that community
 - iv. OHR staff says VA Beach's Human Rights Commission has a primary focus of outreach, so getting in contact with them may be helpful for ideas
 - v. Commissioner says it feels like a lot of consistent work would be necessary to do these events effectively; is concerned about the Commission's ability to keep up with them
 - 1. OHR staff says Ashley is more interested in the *what* than the *how*, and wants feedback to ask Council for support
 - 2. Expectations are not that Commission carries out the programmatic details
 - vi. Commissioner says City should focus on the informational aspect of commemorating the events
 - vii. Chair summarizes that the Commission recommends to Ashley that yes, her ideas are valuable; the city should focus on the educational aspect of these events and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities
 - 1. Also, whoever takes on this task should partner with VA Beach's Commission since they have a focus on outreach
- d. Community Town Hall
 - i. Context comes from the public comment from the last regular meeting; Chair would like the Commission to engage more effectively with the public
 - ii. Chair says doing the town hall after a bystander training could help both Council and members of the public adhere more to a community code of conduct
 - 1. Commissioner stresses the importance of having a "team" mindset where all members of a community must be willing to

- defend their colleagues in order to be engaged
 - 2. Chair says creating norms for treating one another would be beneficial to prevent individuals from being attacked
 - a. Must come from City Council as a model
 - b. Could have some way to pause or stop public comment when things turn personal
- e. Guidelines for working together and public comment
 - i. Commissioner says Lyle Solla-Yates of the Planning Commission created a statement that Commission could use at the beginning of meetings
 - 1. He also cuts off members of the public as soon as they begin a personal attack
 - 2. Chair says a non-verbal way to trigger an action would be effective, such as Lyle's ability to mute
 - a. Copying the Planning Commission's statement could encourage Council to do the same so that there is consistency
 - ii. Commissioner says a time limit would also be helpful
 - 1. 3 minutes?
 - 2. OHR staff says the agenda has a statement that the Chair has discretion over stopping public comment, but this is not verbalized
 - a. Can ask Communications if putting a timer on the screen would be possible
 - iii. **Will share the Planning Commission's statement with the entire Human Rights Commission**
 - 1. Do not have to vote on it since it is essentially the same as what is written at the top of every agenda
 - a. Though codifying through resolutions and changes to bylaws is always a good idea
 - 2. Just be cautious that HRC is not restricting first amendment rights
 - iv. Chair says it would be nice to quickly summarize in plain language what the Commission is and is not able to do at the beginning of meetings
- f. Potential support of Jefferson School proposal for disposition of Civil War statues
 - i. There were seven proposals received for the disposition of the Lee and Jackson statues, and the Jefferson School put in a 42-page proposal to transform the Lee statue into ingots; would then be transformed into another statue by a BIPOC artist with public discussion
 - 1. The only local proposal and the only proposal by a Black-led organization; the most detailed proposal that has received much support
 - ii. There was a request for the Commission to craft a statement in support of this proposal, as well as urge Council to make a decision
 - iii. **Commissioner asks if Mary could make a statement at the next Council meeting on behalf of the Commission without a vote**
 - 1. Wanted to get out the statement before the next HRC regular meeting

2. Would like Council to make their decision at their next meeting

5. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

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

6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a. Andy and other present Commissioners offer congratulations on Todd's new role as Director at OHR
 - i. Could begin the process of hiring more staff

7. NEXT STEPS

- a. **General Next Steps**
 - i. **Recommendations to Ashley**
 1. **August 2017 Commemoration: Commission would like to see more of a call to action; wants to hold City Council accountable while reflecting what the Black community actually wants**
 2. **Commemorative months/days: Ashley's ideas are valuable, and the city should focus on the educational aspect of these events, as well as amplifying the voices of marginalized communities**
- b. **Lyndeale**
 - i. **Will send the finished version of A21-1 to the entire Commission to be voted upon at the next regular meeting**
 - ii. **Draft plain-language resolution saying that all resolutions going forward (and past ones) have plain-language versions**
- c. **Todd**
 - i. **Circulate Planning Commission's statement with the entire HRC to put into use in future meetings**
- d. **Mary**
 - i. **Make statement in support of the Jefferson School proposal at the next City Council meeting**

8. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 2:08 pm