



**Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
June 16, 2022  
Virtual/Electronic Meeting  
6:30 pm**

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**1) WELCOME**

- a) CALL TO ORDER
  - i) Chair, Jessica Harris, called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm
- b) ROLL CALL
  - i) Jessica Harris
  - ii) Ernest Chambers
  - iii) Jeanette Abi-Nader
  - iv) Mary Bauer
  - v) Wolfgang Keppley
  - vi) Kathryn Laughon
  - vii) Lyndele Von Schill (arrived 7:03 pm)
- 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) Molly Conger
    - (1) Asks about the IT Analyst in charge of public safety software with the Charlottesville Fire Dept. who participated in the Jan. 6 insurrection
    - (2) The City declined to take action against him, but Molly has since uncovered videos of him partaking in events at the Capitol which fall into more than an exercise of free speech
    - (3) Expresses concerns with analyst's behavior and affiliations based upon his ability to prevent dispatch
- b) COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
  - i) Mary
    - (1) Interested in the specifics of his actions besides being present at the insurrection
    - (2) Chair asks Molly to email the Commission with more information at the end of this meeting
  - ii) Ernest
    - (1) Expresses hope that the City will take the right course of action

**3) MINUTES**

- a) Review of minutes from 5/19/2022

- i) Motion to approve: Ernest
- ii) Second: Mary
- iii) Vote
  - (1) In favor: 5
  - (2) Opposed: 0
  - (3) Abstained: 1

#### 4) BUSINESS MATTERS

- a) OHR Staff reports
  - i) OHR Director
    - (1) Report is attached
    - (2) Some cases have become more complicated since posting the report
      - (a) Mediation is challenging when a complainant does not have legal representation, but a respondent does
      - (b) It has been difficult to find pro bono legal representation
      - (c) OHR Director recommends thinking about how to make mediation more accessible for individuals
    - (3) Still working on 2021 Report, Department Scorecard, and amendments to the Ordinance
      - (a) Goal to finish by the end of June
    - (4) Commissioner asks about current trends in types of cases coming through the Office and if the prevalence of cases about emergency housing has continued
      - (a) Not as many emergency housing discrimination cases, just housing discrimination housing cases in general
      - (b) Many inquiries about finding emergency housing from individuals having trouble finding stable housing, especially individuals with mental health challenges or substance use disorder challenges
      - (c) Current lack of mental health/substance use care in the community coupled with a shortage of housing for homeless individuals
    - (5) Commissioner asks if now is a good time to begin putting together a budget plan to address these types of issues so that it is ready by October when departments begin putting forth their budgets
      - (a) OHR Director says there is a draft resolution that provides a skeleton program, though it is unclear whether it is for the OHR or Council-managed budget
      - (b) City Attorney's office said there is a possibility of starting a 501(c)(3) to create a fund
      - (c) Director is open to ideas, and his preliminary thoughts are in the draft resolution
      - (d) Commissioner asks if including it in the OHR budget could be a more direct way to ask Council
        - (i) It is often difficult to change the budget, but OHR Director can look into this
    - (6) Commissioner asks about numbers this month compared to last month

- (a) Not all June data is entered so far, but possibly 14 incoming contacts per day, whereas April had an average of 10 per day
    - (b) Means the OHR cannot provide as quality service as is ideal
  - ii) HRC Outreach Specialist update
    - (1) Spent the last month maintaining ties with other similar community agencies
      - (a) One-on-one or informational meetings
    - (2) Outreach materials discussed last meeting are in the finalization process, and will be completed soon
      - (a) Working on getting them more accessible, such as larger font and braille
    - (3) Working with Communications to get short descriptions/videos on protected activities for the Human Rights Ordinance
      - (a) Project with an OHR intern
      - (b) 6 short pieces on what a protected activity is and how the Ordinance can provide help
      - (c) Getting finalized toward the end of July
- b) Chair update
  - i) Proposes not having a July meeting to provide rest and connect one on one and/or host committee meetings that did not take place last month
    - (1) Council has canceled one or two meetings in July
    - (2) Commissioners express general support for having committee meetings but not the regular meeting
  - ii) Ernest makes a motion to not hold a regular meeting for the month of July
    - (1) Second: Wolfgang
    - (2) Vote
      - (a) In favor: 7
      - (b) Opposed: 0
      - (c) Abstained: 0
  - iii) Chair will reach out individually to Commissioner to schedule potential one-on-one meetups, either virtually or in person

## 5) WORK SESSION

- a) Committee Reports
  - i) Community Engagement Committee (Committee Chair reporting: Lyndeale)
    - (1) Met last week to discuss future goals and actions of the Community Engagement committee
    - (2) Decided to hold sessions for the remainder of the year
      - (a) 2 in-person sessions at the same time the OHR is tabling at certain events
        - (i) Can pick from Westhaven Day 8/6/22, CRANU (time TBA), and Pride Festival 9/18/22
        - (ii) Less structured with people casually walking up to the table
      - (b) 2 virtual meetings
        - (i) Lyndeale volunteers to be present at all of these

- (ii) More structured with general topics of discussion, though still flexible
  - (3) Commissioner adds Community Engagement committee wants to hold space for other committees' plans since they have not met yet
  - (4) Jeanette is putting together a mission statement for the committees
  - (5) Lyndele is the new Chair of this committee
- b) Resolution HR21-1 (Language Access Plan)
  - i) Commission has already voted upon it
  - ii) Commissioner asks previous HRC Chair Mary if she has signed the resolution and written a letter to City Council to attach to resolution
  - iii) Can add to Housing committee agenda
- c) Scheduling future committee meetings
  - i) Could create a standing meeting time to more easily coordinate in the future
    - (1) Will do this during the August regular meeting
  - ii) **Housing committee: 6/21/22 at 6:30pm**
    - (1) Attendees: Mary, Wolfgang
  - iii) **Equity in City Government Review committee: 7/12/22 at 1pm**
    - (1) Attendees: Kathryn, Ernest
  - iv) OHR Director will confirm times via email to the entire Commission
  - v) OHR capacity expansion does not need its own committee, and can take more individual work with OHR Director
    - (1) Will be more important during budget season
    - (2) Director will have CY21 Report by the end of June and get HUD responses to finalize the Ordinance and CY21 Report to present to Commission in August; can then get work session with Council in late August then present to Council in September (just before the beginning of October budget season)
    - (3) Commission should be prepared to look at the Ordinance during the August meeting

## 6) MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a) PUBLIC COMMENT
  - i) None
- b) COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
  - i) Commissioner follows up on Commissioners' earlier comments
    - (1) Asks other Commissioners if they want to pursue more information
    - (2) Commissioner supports writing a letter to Council expressing concerns
  - ii) Molly responds
    - (1) Lloyd Snook privately shared with Molly's acquaintance that he has no power to do anything about the situation
    - (2) Believes it is within the Commission's purview to make a statement to the City expressing concerns with a public safety professional participating publicly with internationally-recognized terrorist groups
      - (a) The Proud Boys have been designated an international

terrorist organization by Canada

- (3) The public safety professional has publicly sympathized with, appeared with, and otherwise supported the Proud Boys
- (4) Expresses dissatisfaction with the Mayor's stance that he cannot do anything about it
- iii) Commissioner expresses hope that the City will take the right course of action
- iv) Commissioners express it is important to learn as much about the situation as possible before taking strong action
  - (1) Police Department does have a Code of Conduct that applies to police officers when they are on and off duty; it is unknown if the Fire Department or City has such a Code of Conduct, but Commission could use CPD's Code of Conduct as a reference or starting point
- v) Commissioner would like the City to conduct a full investigation into the matter
  - (1) Says that participation in the armed insurrection is different than a simple difference in opinion
- vi) Commissioner recommends reading Ms. Conger's Twitter feed to stay up to date on the matter
  - (1) Expresses that the Mayor's stance may have been taken before more information was available
- vii) Vice-Chair asks what course of action the Commission should take
- viii) Commissioner believes the HRC should find as much information as possible and issue a statement expressing concern and encouraging the City to take action
  - (1) Question of whether this public safety individual can uphold the safety of Charlottesville citizens
- ix) **HRC Director offers looking into the existence of a citywide Code of Conduct**
- x) **Chair and Wolfgang will work on drafting a letter to send to Council**
  - (1) Letter will be circulated through the Commission for feedback after its creation

## 7) COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a) OHR Director
  - i) Pending resolutions email: take a look at this email to decide which actions to take going forward
  - ii) Will finalize during the Housing committee meeting
  - iii) Once resolution is signed, Commission can write a letter to Council emphasizing the resolution's importance
    - (1) Will also add to agenda for Housing committee meeting

## 8) NEXT STEPS

- a) **Jessica**
  - i) **Work on draft of letter to Council regarding public safety individual**
- b) **Wolfgang**
  - i) **Work on draft of letter to Council regarding public safety individual**
- c) **Todd**
  - i) **Look into citywide Code of Conduct**
  - ii) **Complete CY21 Report and continue steps of amending the Ordinance**

- d) Committee meetings:
  - i) Housing committee: 6/21/22 at 6:30pm
  - ii) Equity in City Government Review committee: 7/12/22 at 1pm
- 9) **ADJOURN**
  - a) Meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm

Pending HRC Approval