



**Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
December 15, 2022  
City Space, 100 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902  
6:30 pm**

Click [HERE](#) to access rebroadcasts of past Human Rights Commission meetings on YouTube.

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**1. WELCOME**

- a. CALL TO ORDER
  - i. Vice Chair, Ernest Chambers, calls the meeting to order at 6:35 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
  - i. Ernest Chambers
  - ii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
  - iii. Mary Bauer
  - iv. Wolfgang Keppley
  - v. Andrew Orban
- 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 Committee Meeting minutes from 11/03/2022
  - i. 2 of 5 present Commissioners attended at least one of the committee meetings
  - ii. Commission tables minutes until there are more Commissioners present who attended the committee meetings
- b. Review of Regular Meeting minutes from 11/17/2022
  - i. 5 of 5 present Commissioners attended regular meeting
  - ii. Motion to approve: Mary
  - iii. Second: Wolfgang
  - iv. Vote
    1. In favor: 5
    2. Opposed: 0
    3. Abstained: 0
  - v. Motion to approve minutes passes

**4. BUSINESS MATTERS**

- a. CHAIR UPDATE
  - i. HRC Director says that 2 or 25% (whichever is greater) regular

meetings and committee meetings can occur virtually per year

1. This means that in 2023, there can be 3 virtual regular meetings and 3 virtual committee meetings
  2. The ad-hoc committees going into 2023 will be the Community Engagement and Housing committees
    - a. Nominating committee also exists temporarily to create ballot for HRC positions
- b. OHR STAFF REPORT (HRC Director)
- i. The OHR is now in a new office space
  - ii. OHR staff have been working on re-classifying data under the new “Navigation” category
    1. “Navigation” refers to helping individuals with things unrelated to complaints of discrimination, such as referring people to other resources, helping people fill out applications, etc.
    2. Point of re-classification is to determine how much work the Office does that is unrelated to its main responsibility of handling complaints of discrimination
    3. Data will be complete by the end of 2022; goal is to compile a report on how time is currently being spent
  - iii. On 12/19/22, Council will make its new appointments to the Commission to fill the single vacancy
    1. There are four applicants (one of whom is Jessica)
    2. It is confirmed that Mary and Wolfgang do not need to re-apply to the Commission
  - iv. The Commission’s legislative agenda recommendations to Council are in the 12/5/22 Council agenda packet, where they are listed as Council’s legislative recommendations to the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC)
    1. Minutes for this meeting are not yet available; they will reflect any changes made during the Council meeting
  - v. Council needs CitySpace for budget hearings on 2/2/23, 3/16/23, and 4/6/23, which overlap with HRC’s meetings
    1. Director has asked about solutions, though the simplest may be to use 2 committee meeting virtual days and 1 regular meeting virtual day
    2. Can think about potential alternative meeting times/venues leading up to the annual retreat
  - vi. There was another homelessness summit (OHR Outreach Specialist attended)
    1. **Todd will send the notes from this meeting to Commissioners once they are available**
    2. General conclusions were that Charlottesville needs more shelters and wraparound services
  - vii. Commissioner asks if there are any explanations for why there was a spike in incoming contacts in September
    1. Can compare if this trend was the same in past years, though there may not be any one particular reason
    2. The number of incoming contacts for 2022 is already double the total number of incoming contacts for 2021

- viii. Commissioner asks how data is recorded
  - 1. Spreadsheet in the Monthly OHR Staff Report is taken from a joint spreadsheet of more detailed information of each contact on OneDrive
  - 2. Data gets entered directly into the spreadsheet or on paper then transferred into the spreadsheet
  - 3. Contacts are any contact with an Office staff person, including walk-ins, emails, and phone calls, and they vary widely in length

## 5. WORK SESSION

### a. AD-HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES

- i. Community Engagement Committee (Jeanette reporting on meeting from 11/03/22)
  - 1. Talked about having another town hall in the new year, supporting housing initiatives, and keeping an eye the community outreach spreadsheet
  - 2. Vice Chair suggests the next town hall be about housing
  - 3. Commissioner asks if town hall would be before or after the 2023 retreat
    - a. Timeline for the town hall in relation to the retreat was not discussed
    - b. Another Commissioner says town hall could occur after the retreat given the current lack of a specific topic, though she believes that if a new research project begins concerning housing, the Commission should focus town hall efforts on that
  - 4. Commissioner says HRC could launch another poll asking the public about what housing topics they would like to be discussed
  - 5. HRC Director says another format the next town hall could take is gathering a panel of resource/service providers from around the city to answer questions from the public
    - a. Commissioner suggests having an intersection of people from both the City and the community
    - b. Could also be a joint effort of Community Engagement and Housing committees to organize panel
  - 6. Vice Chair expresses desire to get started on organizing community outreach efforts early in the new year and suggests using a weekend for the retreat instead of overlapping with one of Council's meetings
    - a. Commissioner asks if Commission could draft a letter acknowledging the housing crisis and framing housing as a human right ahead of Council's budget meetings
      - i. Commission has done this before in support of providing attorneys in eviction cases
      - ii. Commission could definitely draft a letter in time; the question would just be what it should specifically push for
      - iii. Director says that HRC could declare its support for policies that have already been

proposed, and the time to bring up new points for the budget would probably be August, as that is when budget conversations begin to take place

- b. Vice Chair says Commission should find what affordable housing/housing resources are in talks and make sure to support those efforts publicly
- c. Commissioner says that last night at the Livable Cville event, Anthony Haro said the City had allocated a flat sum of money, but it should base its allocations off of need rather than just a flat sum
  - i. Commissioner has followed up about this point
- ii. Nominating Committee
  - 1. Elections will occur during January's regular meeting
  - 2. Wolfgang presents the slate of nominees:
    - a. Chair:
      - i. Jessica Harris (has accepted nomination)
    - b. Vice Chair:
      - i. Ernest Chambers (has accepted nomination)
  - 3. Director confirms there are three applicants for one open slot
    - a. The newly appointed person will not be able to vote in the election, as their term will begin in March

## **6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**

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

## **7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

- a. HRC Director
  - i. Ordinance that has been in the works for months passed during the 11/21/22 Council meeting
    - 1. Now, the Ordinance has substantial equivalence to federal fair housing law
    - 2. Director needs to contact HUD for next steps to enter into workshare agreement
  - ii. Hiring for Intake Specialist is now in the hands of Human Resources
    - 1. Next step is to make final tweaks and advertise the position after the holidays
- b. Wolfgang
  - i. The Haven is hosting their first ever open house on Monday, 1/30/23 from 6pm to 7:30pm
    - 1. Online signups with Eventbrite which Wolfgang can share
- c. Jeanette
  - i. Community Engagement Committee had talked about Climate Action Plan passed by Council, which is another milestone for the City
    - 1. Community groups working with the City have a broad plan, so they will have to stay engaged over the course of the implementation process
- d. Vice Chair conducts a check-in given recent difficult events in Charlottesville;

expresses support for the Commission and everyone in the Charlottesville community

- i. Commissioner expresses desire to be more effective as a Commission
- ii. Commissioner suggests that Commissioners sit in at the OHR at some point to observe its work
- iii. Commissioner acknowledges anniversary of Sandy Hook massacre

#### **8. NEXT STEPS**

- a. Commission decides to not hold committee meetings on 1/6/23
  - i. Will reconvene committees virtually on 2/2/23
  - ii. Housing committee will continue to do work via email; will work on identifying priorities ahead of the annual retreat
    1. Tell Wolfgang if you are interested in joining committee
- b. Todd
  - i. Send the notes from housing summit to Commissioners once they are available
  - ii. Ask for HRC committee meetings on 2/2/23 and 4/6/23 to be virtual
- c. The Haven's open house will be on 1/30/23 from 6pm-7:30pm

#### **9. ADJOURN**

- a. Meeting adjourns at 7:29 pm