



**Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
January 19, 2023  
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.

Click [HERE](#) to access an archive of past Human Rights Commission work on the City website.

**1. WELCOME**

- a. CALL TO ORDER
  - i. Chair, Jessica Harris, called the hybrid meeting to order at 6:35 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
  - i. Jessica Harris
  - ii. Ernest Chambers
  - iii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
  - iv. Wolfgang Keppley
  - v. Kathryn Laughon (joining via Zoom)
  - vi. Lyndele Von Schill
- 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 Regular Meeting minutes from 08/18/22
  - i. Vote
    1. In favor: 5
    2. Opposed: 0
    3. Abstained: 1
  - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes
- b. Review of Community Engagement Committee meeting minutes from 08/30/22
  - i. Vote
    1. In favor: 3
    2. Opposed: 0
    3. Abstained: 3
  - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes
- c. Review of Combined Committee meeting minutes from 11/03/22
  - i. Vote
    1. In favor: 3
    2. Opposed: 0

- 3. Abstained: 3
- ii. Motion to approve minutes passes
- d. Review of Regular Meeting minutes from 15/15/22
  - i. Vote
    - 1. In favor: 4
    - 2. Opposed: 0
    - 3. Abstained: 2
  - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

#### 4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. Officer Elections
  - i. No additional nominations since Nominating Committee presented the slate during the previous meeting
  - ii. Chair nominations: Jessica Harris
    - 1. Motion to nominate Jessica Harris: Lyndele
      - a. Second: Wolfgang
    - 2. Vote
      - a. In favor: 6
      - b. Opposed: 0
      - c. Abstained: 0
  - iii. Jessica Harris becomes Chair of the HRC
  - iv. Vice-Chair nominations: Ernest Chambers
    - 1. Motion to nominate Ernest Chambers: Lyndele
      - a. Second: Wolfgang
    - 2. Vote
      - a. In favor: 6
      - b. Opposed: 0
      - c. Abstained: 0
  - v. Ernest Chambers becomes Vice Chair of the HRC
- b. CHAIR UPDATE
  - i. Chair offers gratitude for nomination and encouragement for the coming year
- c. OHR STAFF REPORT: HRC Director
  - i. Service provision data is complete for 2022
  - ii. In 2022, the OHR had 1,290 more incoming contacts than the previous year, which was already the most incoming contacts in history
  - iii. Currently in the process of hiring Intake and Administrative Specialist for the OHR
    - 1. Investigator will be the next hire
  - iv. Sent Erik Steinecker (Interim Director of Federal Housing Assistance Programs [FHAPs] in the United States) the revised Ordinance to ask about next steps regarding substantial equivalence with fair housing law
    - 1. Commissioner asks about getting in contact with Erik Steinecker
    - 2. Mr. Steinecker spoke at a Commission meeting in the past, but Todd can ask for him to join virtually for another question-and-answer session
  - v. Community Engagement Committee will be meeting on 2/2/23 (virtual)
  - vi. Director asks Commissioners whether they would like to hold the retreat in place of regular meeting on 03/16/23
    - 1. Retreat can last up to 4 hours; most Commissioners would be

- able to meet during the day on 03/16/23 (would not still hold regular meeting in the evening)
2. Council has scheduled a budget meeting at 5pm on this date, so it would be advantageous to hold the retreat earlier in the day and end before 4:30pm
  3. Friday 03/17/23 would also be an option as there are no other scheduled meetings in CitySpace
  4. Commissioners decide to send a survey to the Commission to allow all members to submit their time preferences
  5. Options are 9am-1pm on 03/16/23, 12pm-4pm on 03/16/23, 9am-1pm on 03/17/23, 12pm-4pm on 03/17/23, or 4pm-8pm on 03/17/23
- vii. Annual Report is already in progress and has goal of being completed by March and the annual retreat
    1. Will present it in person to City Council in May or June
  - viii. Todd, Jessica, and Ernest will meet in person to discuss the retreat, the report, etc. in the coming weeks
  - ix. Commissioner would like to see a comparison of years pre-COVID, during COVID, and post-COVID (this year counting as during COVID)
    1. This chart of comparison over the years of incoming contacts exists in the in-progress CY2022 Annual Report
    2. Commissioner also asks about lack of referrals to Sin Barerras
      - a. Director says there were no referrals from or to Sin Barerras this year; referrals are dependent on the nature of the inquiry
    3. OHR Intern shows Commissioner OHR data through time (chart will be available in the 2022 Annual Report)
      - a. Explains that every contact type (complaints, inquiries, general contacts, etc.) have almost always steadily increased over time
        - i. Besides in 2020 due to COVID
  - x. OHR Director says there were significantly more resolutions through mediation this year due to the partnership which began in 2021
  - xi. Commissioner asks about data collection process
    1. OHR staff receive contacts from individuals via phone calls, emails, texts, in-person visits, etc., which are all inputted into an Excel spreadsheet
    2. Commissioner asks about the possibility of getting a Computer Science major from UVA to streamline the database and assist with data-gathering (and potentially remove some of the work it requires to maintain the current database)
      - a. Excel works because it is accessible, and getting a new interface would require more training, a person who is familiar with the technology, and significant amounts of work to make it comparable with the Excel database
    3. OHR staff are still open to getting more help with technology
      - a. If there is anyone interested in having a conversation, they can reach out to the OHR
  - xii. OHR intern asks about the contents of Resolution A18-2

1. This resolution established a UVA student liaison who would be a non-voting member of the Commission
  - a. Eventually, contact with the affiliate disappeared, so the HRC decided not to continue pursuing the partnership
- xiii. Commissioner asks whether this presented data and personal information of individuals are connected in any way
  1. This data is from a case management database; Commissioners will never see the personal information of individuals, though contacts are tied to specific people in the database
- xiv. Commissioner asks about the outreach section of the monthly report and how the HRC can support the OHR's work
  1. OHR Outreach specialist explains that she has been working with an animator to create OHR videos describing each of the five protected activities
    - a. During the summer, OHR staff worked on drafting and recording scripts for each protected activity
    - b. Currently still working on the first video, which can be shared once complete
  2. There is also going to be a panel discussion with the Disability Law Center from Richmond
    - a. Zoom or hybrid meeting
    - b. Working on including other voices to discuss reasonable accommodations etc., as well as disability as a protected class in general
  3. Will share updates as they come
- xv. Commissioner asks about getting the videos translated into Spanish
  1. Currently, they are only planned to be in English, and OHR staff are only focusing on the first video for now, but Spanish translations should be possible eventually
    - a. OHR Intern adds that adding Spanish audio to the same videos should be relatively simple to create (if this would comply with copyright laws)

## **5. WORK SESSION**

- a. AD-HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES
  - i. Housing (Chair: Wolfgang)
    1. Invites other Commissioners to join the committee
    2. Requests feedback on letter sent about budget proposals
    3. Deputy City Manager sent feedback with resources for internal City workers
    4. Commissioner asks for letter to be resent to Commission

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

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

## **7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

- a. Ernest
  - i. The Haven has an open house at 6pm on 01/30/23

- b. Kathryn
  - i. Livable Cville webinar is recorded, so anyone can view the webinar on its website
  - ii. "Housing cures homelessness" is the main takeaway
- c. Ernest
  - i. There is a new Police Chief in the City, Chief Michael Kochis
    - 1. Expresses hope in his leadership
  - ii. Asks Commissioners to keep monitoring budgeting conversations for the City, especially related to housing
  - iii. Commissioner adds that the meeting with Chief Brackney in 2021 was productive; suggests having a meeting with the new Police Chief to discuss his plans in the City
    - 1. Another Commissioner adds that she would like to know how the Police Chief provides information about police budget
    - 2. Another Commissioner says it may be worth checking in about the conversation topics from during the conversation with Chief Brackney to see if they are still relevant
  - iv. Suggests aiming for a conversation with the new Police Chief during the summer
    - 1. HRC Director adds that the Police Civilian Review Board is in the process of hiring a new Director, so the summer may be a good timeline to allow the Chief Kochis to be acquainted with the new PCOB Director
      - a. Hiring for PCOB Director is in progress
    - 2. HRC Chair thanks Latroy Durette for his service as Interim Police Chief
- d. Future committee times
  - i. Commissioner asks whether the 02/02/23 and 03/02/23 Combined Committee meetings will count toward the 25% rule for virtual meetings
    - 1. It will still count since there is no other space for the HRC to reserve
  - ii. Individuals can still meet virtually for as many meetings as needed as long as they qualify for certain criteria under state law
  - iii. 25% of 12 meetings would give Commissioners one more opportunity for an all-virtual committee meeting during 2023 after 03/02/23
  - iv. HRC Director offers looking into alternative spaces for meetings to preserve the potential virtual dates

## 8. NEXT STEPS

- a. Jessica, Ernest, & Todd
  - i. Meet to check in about the year
- b. All Commissioners
  - i. Respond to Wolfgang's poll regarding times for annual retreat
- c. Todd
  - i. Check in about the rule regarding virtual meetings
- d. Next Combined Committee meeting: virtual on 02/02/23

## 9. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

