



CITY OF WHEELING HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1500 Chapline Street, Room 305
Wheeling, WV 26003

COMMISSIONERS

Bryant Anderson

Frank Calabrese

Rev. Ralph W. Dunkin

Elisa Hickman

David Miller

Loma Nevels

Emily L. Ward

Wheeling Human Rights Commission

Regular meeting of the Wheeling Human Rights Commission December 21, 2021.

Commissioners present: Anderson, Calabrese, Dunkin, Miller, Nevels and Ward.

Commissioners absent: Hickman.

City of Wheeling Staff present: Adams and Thompson.

CALL TO ORDER

A roll call was held. With a quorum present, the business meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Chairman Dunkin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular meeting: November 16, 2021. The minutes had been previously emailed. Commissioner Calabrese motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Miller. The motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

SWPALS 2021 Education and Outreach Project The 2021 Agreement with the Fair Housing Law Center at Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services runs from April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022. The HRC is committed to 35 hours of Education and Outreach under the 2021 Agreement. Ms. Thompson reported that the HRC has now met 8 hours, as Chairman Dunkin and Ms. Adams attended HUD's Equal Access Training webinar. She added that she had yet to arrange Fair Housing training for landlords with the Ohio County Public Library and SWPALS.

Second Annual Community Award for Someone Who Supports Human Rights Commissioner Miller indicated that he had received one nomination, and he requested that any other recommendations be emailed to him.

The Crown Act Chairman Dunkin stated that Commissioner Nevels and possibly two other individuals would speak at that night's meeting of City Council regarding the CROWN Act. The proposed Ordinance language previously provided by Rosemary Ketchum was reviewed and discussed. Commissioner Calabrese motioned that the HRC vote upon accepting and forwarding the language to City Council, seconded by Commissioner Nevels. A vote was held and the language was approved unanimously.

HRC Support for Inclusion Coordinator Chairman Dunkin indicated that he had no new information regarding where this potential City position stands.

Annual Report for Period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 Chairman Dunkin informed that the HRC's Annual Report was submitted on the due date of December 1.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution on Conversion Therapy Chairman Dunkin had previously emailed a Resolution which he had drafted regarding Conversion Therapy. The issue of conversion therapy and how it relates to discrimination was discussed. A vote was held and the language was approved unanimously.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration – January 2022 Commissioner Calabrese spoke that he has been a long-time member of the MLK Committee, and that he has been tasked with fundraising. His foundation has made a grant and he requested that the members of the HRC, as individuals, as well as the HRC as a body, consider donating to the

celebration. Chairman Dunkin suggested that the HRC could match donations up to the first \$1000 to the committee. Commissioner Calabrese made a motion that the HRC match donations up to \$1,000 total. There was discussion that the MLK Celebration budget is used for programming, activities, and meals related to the annual celebration, and that Wheeling Jesuit University maintains and oversees an account for the donations. Ms. Thompson suggested that any HRC donation be taken from the HRC's general fund account which holds the SWPALS reimbursement funds, and not from the CDBG account, due to restrictions on the use of CDBG funds. Commissioner Nevels seconded the motion with the stipulation made by Ms. Thompson, and added that she is a reviewer for the children's essay contest, and that she believes that children have a much better interpretation of Martin Luther King, Jr., than adults do. The motion carried.

Black History Month – February 2022 Ms. Thompson stated that the HRC typically runs an ad on five dates in the Wheeling Newspaper and in one Sunday Showtime, inviting the community to celebrate Black History Month. In 2021 additionally, the HRC ran an ad in a special Black History Month insert in the newspaper. The total in 2021 was \$803. Our contact at the newspaper did not have 2022 rates yet, but suggested that they should be similar. Commissioner Anderson motioned that the HRC publish ads in the newspaper for Black History Month in February, at a cost of no more than \$1,000. Commissioner Nevels seconded, and the motion passed.

Future Meetings Discussion Chairman Dunkin asked the HRC wished to continue to meet virtually, or in person. Commissioner Calabrese suggested continuing to meet virtually on Zoom, and Commissioner Miller agreed. After discussion, Chairman Dunkin stated that the HRC's consensus was to continue meeting by Zoom through March, 2022, when the HRC will revisit the issue.

Citizen Inquiry/Complaint Activity Log through December 17, 2021 The confidential report was emailed to the members in advance of the meeting. Ms. Thompson reported that a few referrals had been made, but no complaint forms had been sent out since the last meeting, and no complaints had been received.

OTHER ISSUES REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS:

No other issues regarding human rights were discussed.

THOSE WISHING TO BE HEARD:

Melissa Adams, the City of Wheeling's Homeless Liaison, introduced herself and spoke about the homeless camp closure that had occurred the week prior, where 62 homeless had been staying. She accepted questions from the HRC members.

REMARKS FROM MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:

Commissioner Miller expressed that the Washington Blade is the first LGBTQ publication to secure a designated seat in the White House press room.

Commissioner Calabrese spoke about the homeless that do not want to receive housing, believing that they do not want to follow rules, and that they need education. Ms. Adams responded that people with a criminal history cannot be accepted into public housing, so there is a need for low barrier housing that does not require background checks. Commissioner Calabrese suggested contacting the re-entry council. Commissioner Miller added that mental illness may also be an issue for some homeless individuals. Ms. Adams said that she was planning to visit other communities who are doing a great job with their homeless to learn from them.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Commissioner Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ralph Dunkin
Chairperson

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