



CITY OF WHEELING HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1500 Chapline Street, Room 305
Wheeling, WV 26003

COMMISSIONERS

Bryant A. Anderson

Vincent DeGeorge

Rev. Ralph W. Dunkin

Elissa Gross

Elisa M. Hickman

Rabbi Joshua Lief

David Miller

Loma Nevels

Emily L. Ward

Wheeling Human Rights Commission

Regular meeting of the Wheeling Human Rights Commission: February 8, 2023

Commissioners present: Anderson, DeGeorge, Dunkin, Gross, Hickman, Lief, Miller and Ward.

Commissioners absent: Nevels.

City of Wheeling Staff present: Thompson.

CALL TO ORDER:

A roll call was held. Chairman Dunkin requested that the record show that Commissioner Nevels remains on medical leave. With a quorum present, the business meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by Chairman Dunkin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular meeting: January 11, 2023. The minutes had been previously emailed. Commissioner Anderson motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

SWPALS 2022 Education and Outreach Project The 2022 Agreement with the Fair Housing Law Center at Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services began on April 1, 2022 and runs through March 31, 2023. The HRC committed to 35 hours of Education and Outreach under the Agreement. Ms. Thompson stated that the HRC has achieved .75 hours since the last meeting, bringing the total achievement to 37.75 hours. The HRC's commitment has been met and exceeded.

The Crown Act Chairman Dunkin stated that CROWN Act related changes to the HRC Ordinance were approved by City Council after a second reading on February 7; a copy of the Ordinance designating the changes was provided. Commissioner DeGeorge congratulated the Chairman and Vice Chairman for their leadership on this matter. He thanked the HRC members for their work as well.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration – January 2023 Commissioner Gross reported that the events were effective and well attended. She pledged to continue the internship program, as well as the music, both of which were her additions to the events this year. Chairman Dunkin stated that the Sunday event started early and that he believed the room was too small as there were no seats when he arrived. Commissioner DeGeorge indicated that events which he attended were great. Commissioner Gross said that the MLK Committee has Frank Calabrese's painting of Martin Luther King, Jr., and wondered if he would be willing to move it to Wheeling Park High School. Chairman Dunkin offered to contact Frank Calabrese.

Black History Month – February 2023 Chairman Dunkin stated that Commissioner Gross had provided handouts for related events at the Ohio County Public Library. Ms. Thompson reported that the HRC's Black History Month ad will be in the paper on five dates in February, as well as in a special Black History Month section on February 23. The HRC will also have a special billboard image on the city's digital billboard at 10th & Market Streets, as well as on social media. This image will not match the newspaper image, but will be a color image consistent with the Juneteenth graphics.

Fair Housing Month – April 2023 Ms. Thompson stated that six billboards have been secured in the city's low to moderate income neighborhoods, and areas near public housing, from April 3 through April 30. She stated that the image

has not been designed, as we typically hope to be consistent with HUD's Fair Housing message. The billboard will also appear on the city's digital billboard at 10th and Market Streets, and on social media.

Implicit Bias Training Chairman Dunkin stated that this item carried over on the agenda in error. The HRC rescinded its \$2,500 commitment for Implicit Bias Training in January, and therefore this issue has been resolved.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Life Hub Chairman Dunkin stated that he had attended a public meeting for the homeless Life Hub on February 2. The planned Hub is the fifth of its kind in the nation, with a goal to reduce the number of homeless. He said that the project does not directly relate to the work of the HRC, but he wanted to report about it for the information of the members of the HRC.

Third Annual Community Award for Someone Who Supports Human Rights Chairman Dunkin asked Commissioner Miller if he was willing to continue to lead this effort, to which Commissioner Miller agreed. There was brief discussion, and Ms. Thompson agreed to inquire about the date for the Mayor's next State of the City address.

Citizen Inquiry/Complaint Activity Log through February 3, 2023 The report was shared. There was one housing complaint issued since the last meeting, but no complaints received. Several referrals were made. Specific details are confidential. There was discussion over following up with potential complainants, and Commissioner DeGeorge offered his availability to assist complainants in following through with the process.

OTHER ISSUES REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS:

Commissioners Ward, Miller and Gross discussed some initial actions being taken to address the HRC's need to raise awareness in the community. The group plans to report back and come up with action steps that the HRC can consider.

THOSE WISHING TO BE HEARD:

Julia Chapman of Wheeling, stated that she previously attended meetings online, but during this in-person meeting, she truly appreciated the interaction between the members of the HRC. She stated that she wished she had attended a live meeting sooner. She expressed several concerns about the Life Hub, however Chairman Dunkin directed her to Melissa Adams' homeless meeting at 1:00 where she may wish to attend and share her concerns. He indicated that the HRC is just staying informed about the Life Hub, but has no direct involvement with homelessness. He added that the HRC is not aware of any discrimination that has occurred within the homeless community. Commissioner DeGeorge stated that the purview of the HRC is very narrow, until discrimination is involved.

REMARKS FROM MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:

Commissioner Miller spoke about a Senate Bill which may increase the number of transgender people that are discriminated against. Commissioner Gross believed that the bill had passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Ralph Dunkin
Chairperson

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