



# CITY OF WHEELING HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1500 Chapline Street, Room 305  
Wheeling, WV 26003

## Wheeling Human Rights Commission

Regular meeting of the Wheeling Human Rights Commission, January 21, 2020.

Commissioners present: Calabrese, Dunkin, Kangisser, Ketchum, Nevels, Sunseri, Ward.

Commissioners absent: Blalock

City of Wheeling Staff present: Thompson.

## COMMISSIONERS

Joseph R. Blalock  
Frank Calabrese  
Rev. Ralph W. Dunkin  
Karen Kangisser  
Rosemary Ketchum  
Loma Nevels  
Anthony Sunseri  
Emily L. Ward

### CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, the business meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Calabrese.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular meeting: November 19, 2019. The minutes had been previously emailed. Commissioner Dunkin motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Kangisser. The motion passed.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

**SWPALS 2019 Education and Outreach Project** Ms. Thompson reported that the HRC has achieved **29.38** of the committed **31** hours of education and outreach. The new balance of hours to achieve is **1.62** hours, which Ms. Thompson was confident would be achieved through attending monthly conference calls. Additionally, there will tentatively be a Fair Housing Training in Wheeling for landlords during Fair Housing Month (April).

**HRC's Screening of the Documentary "Outspoken" about the LGBT Community** Commissioner Ketchum reported that the film was spectacular, but the attendance was lower than expected due to weather and timing. There was a panel discussion following the screening and Commissioners Ketchum and Calabrese were joined by Activist David Miller and Vice Mayor Chad Thalman as panelists.

**Ideas for Promoting the HRC** Chairman Calabrese said that the HRC had given him approval previously to reach out to the media for the community's ideas for additional events, and that he still intends to do so. He asked if the HRC had any other suggestions. Commissioner Dunkin stated that he and Commissioner Nevels are on a Census Board and always represent the HRC in any such capacity. Relevant bills in the WV legislature were discussed. A motion was made by Commissioner Dunkin to draft and send a letter to the WV Senators in support of a bill which will add protections for the LGBTQ community to the WV Human Rights Ordinance. Commissioner Nevels questioned whether the letter should be reviewed by the City Solicitor. After discussion, Commissioner Kangisser seconded the motion, under the condition that the City Solicitor approves the letter, and that all members of the HRC also have the opportunity to review and vote upon the letter by email. Motion carried. Commissioner Dunkin suggested sending the final letter to the Wheeling Newspaper, and Chairman Calabrese suggested that he has a list of 43 newspapers in WV where he can send the final letter, if agreed. He stated that a side benefit to the letter will be the added credibility and awareness of the Wheeling HRC in the state.

**Annual Report for Period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019** Ms. Thompson reported that the HRC's Annual Report was submitted to the Administration and City Council on November 27, 2019, prior to the due date of December 1. She thanked the Commissioners who reviewed and provided approval of the draft prior to submission.

**Revisit the HRC's Regular Business Meeting Time (Tabled until February 2020)** Chairman Calabrese asked the members to think about the meeting time over the next month, and to bring ideas for discussion to the next meeting. He suggested that staff should not be burdened outside of the normal working hours of 8:30am to 5:00pm.

**Continued Discussion Regarding Offering an Annual Community Award to someone Who Supports the Work of the HRC** Commissioner Kangisser reported that specific criteria and a selection format are necessary in order to be consistent

on a yearly basis. There was discussion, and an ad hoc committee was suggested. Chairman Calabrese appointed Commissioner Kangisser to chair the committee, and Commissioners Ketchum, Ward and Sunseri agreed to join. Commissioner Dunkin motioned that the committee join together and recommend how the HRC can select/nominate a recipient for an award, and report back to the HRC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kangisser and it passed.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration, January 2020** Chairman Calabrese noted that the celebration already occurred, but that he and Commissioner Nevels had attended events, and that it was the largest march and celebration that he has attended. There was a full crowd at the dinner and awards were given. There was discussion about the awards given at the celebration, as well as the history and purpose for celebration and events.

**Black History Month, February 2020** Chairman Calabrese asked if the HRC was interested in running the ad which invites the community to celebrate Black History Month in February 2020, at a cost of \$395. Ms. Thompson advised that the ad would run on five separate dates throughout the month, as well as during one issue of the Sunday Showtime insert. After discussion, Commissioner Dunkin motioned to approve the request to run the ad, allowing Ms. Thompson to decide the dates. Commissioner Kangisser seconded, and the motion carried.

**Fair Housing Month, April 2020** Ms. Thompson reported that promoting Fair Housing is an important responsibility with the City and the HRC receiving CDBG funding. Typically, the HRC dedicates part of its budget to Fair Housing billboards. Lamar is honoring the same price as before, which is six boards at \$3,000, or four boards at \$2,200, including production costs. Billboard locations are usually the low-moderate income neighborhoods and areas near public housing. Commissioner Dunkin motioned to secure six billboards at the cost of \$3,000 for Fair Housing Month, and allow the Chair to approve the design. Commissioner Nevels seconded. There was discussion regarding the effectiveness of billboards for promotion, and that there are better and/or less expensive ways to engage the community, including visiting the high rises. Chairman Calabrese stated that doing billboards does not preclude the HRC from doing these things also. Ms. Thompson reminded that the intent is also to host a Landlord Training, and to have a Fair Housing Proclamation at City Council. The HRC currently has total available funding in the amount of \$17,431.47. A vote was held and the motion carried.

**Citizen Inquiry/Complaint Activity Log through January 17, 2020** Ms. Thompson explained the confidential report which ran from November 16 to January 17, 2020. The HRC is investigating one active housing complaint. Three public accommodations complaints received from the same individual were found to be not valid or out of the HRC's jurisdiction.

**THOSE WISHING TO BE HEARD:**

There was no one wishing to be heard.

**REMARKS FROM MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:**

Commissioner Ward, in reference to the Martin Luther King discussion, said that society has slid backwards and those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it. She added that we should live our lives through the ideals of Mr. King daily, not just one day of the year, which should be some of the HRC's collective mission.

Commissioner Ketchum echoed Commissioner Ward's remarks. She added that focusing on politics can be frustrating, as it works at a glacial pace; and that she is inspired that the work of the community is making the City of Wheeling a better, more equitable place. She expressed gratitude for the work of the HRC.

Chairman Calabrese thanked those present for attending, and encouraged the members to attend the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business Commissioner Ketchum made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:32am, seconded by Commissioner Dunkin.

Respectfully Submitted,



Frank Calabrese  
Chairperson

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