



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Ad Hoc Committee Meetings
February 2, 2023
Virtual/Electronic Meeting
6:30 pm**

Click [HERE](#) to access the public link to the Human Rights Commission shared OneDrive folder.

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. Committee Outreach Chair, Lyndele Von Schill, called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Lyndele Von Schill
 - ii. Jessica Harris
 - iii. Wolfgang Keppley
 - iv. Ernest Chambers (joined 6:57pm)
- 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. None

4. WORK SESSION

- a. Community Engagement Committee – Chair: Lyndele Von Schill
 - i. Planning for upcoming expert panels and town hall meetings
 - 1. HRC Director says that he has been trying to formalize an annual calendar so that community outreach all leads to some kind of final product
 - 2. Shares a small draft calendar as a starting point
 - a. Advises Commissioners to use the calendar to guide their ensuing conversations
 - b. Commissioner asks whether meeting is live on Facebook
 - i. It is likely not since the budget meetings are taking recording software at the moment
 - 3. Commissioner asks whether there should be a difference between town hall meetings and expert panels

- a. Could schedule town hall and a panel to better inform that town hall
4. Commissioner reflects on previous town halls where they wished that Commissioners could give more informed responses, so featuring expert panelists at a town hall may be helpful
 - a. Potential problem would be Commissioners deferring to often to experts, as well as asking experts to sit and answer all incoming questions for over an hour
5. Commissioner asks what respondents deemed second-most important in the public poll
6. Commissioner differentiates two kinds of experts within the city that could be good to talk to: those that know about existing problems, and those that offer resources that people may not already know about
 - a. Director recommends choosing a single priority during the retreat this year and making it as specific as possible
 - i. This would allow the Commission to ask more specific questions about a topic they may not know much about yet
 - ii. Could ask experts to help answer important questions in one meeting, then allow the public to ask questions during another meeting
 1. Use all the meetings to build off one another, then build this into a recommendation to Council (or other goal)
7. Director's proposed annual calendar lists first expert panel in May, first town hall in June, second expert panel in July, and second town hall in November (with legislative recommendations finalized for Council in August)
8. Commissioner suggests beginning by thinking about potential focus topics ahead of the retreat and trying not to repeat what the Commission has already done
9. Experts being brought to the Commission will depend on the chosen focus topics
 - a. Commissioner uses example of how there is always a crisis in December and June when taxes are due
 - i. Asks whom the Commission would talk to about funding that helps low-income people keep their homes when taxes are due
 - b. Director says generating idea about what to focus on will be from the retreat, but during this meeting, it may be helpful in thinking about planning and logistics required for organizing these kinds of meetings
10. Topics from last year's town hall was a 45-minute discussion about emergency housing and a 45-minute discussion about the quality of affordable public and subsidized housing

- a. Commissioner recommends creating another poll to set priorities for the two upcoming town halls of this summer
 - b. Director says Commission could release a poll ahead of the retreat in March
 - c. Commissioner recommends planning next town hall based on feedback the Commission has already received, then using a new poll for the following town hall
- 11. Commissioner suggests making the first expert panel about emergency housing, and inviting those who provide this resource to the community
 - a. Allow public to ask questions
 - b. Commissioner asks whether people who need to hear the information will have the Internet access to view the meeting
 - i. Can do meeting in person
 - ii. Could have meeting in multiple places (ex. Using CitySpace technology to host a hybrid meeting)
 - c. Commissioner asks how much it costs to rent the stage area at Carver
 - i. Carver Rec Center is a City building, so it is free to use
 - d. Director recommends that the Commission identify partners who would help set up cameras and screens for groups of their constituents who can then join the meeting remotely
- 12. Commissioner suggests doing outreach with wraparound service providers to ask them what they need addressed
 - a. Director says the main objective of the meetings would be to inform the Commission as they make legislative recommendations, which is its main power
 - i. Simply letting the public ask service providers questions may not get what the Commission wants
- 13. Commissioner would like to see the Commission do more action-oriented things to make a difference in the community
 - a. Commission's role is about systemic impact more than individual service provision and tell the City things that they should do to fix systemic issues
- 14. Commissioner says that if there were a policy solution, it likely would have already been recommended by service providers
 - a. Therefore, it may be better to recommend not new policies, but highlight existing priorities that have been outlined by service providers
 - b. This is the point of inviting community experts
 - c. Another Commissioner notes that the City has surplus money, but it is often spent in ways that are not helpful

for underserved communities

- i. Director recommends bringing in a range of experts (ex. Someone from PACEM and BRACH but also someone from the Budget Office who can explain how the allocation process works)

15. Director says that Commission can also do fact-finding by doing one-on-one meetings with potential experts, which could be powerful seeing different perspectives and parts of the system (whether this be inside or outside the City)

- a. Get to know experts to know who to invite to the town halls
- b. Commissioner suggests circulating an email of lists of potential contacts to talk to one-on-one (will use a shared document)

16. Final idea is to plan the first expert panel that features both City employees and service providers

- a. **Will meet individually with potential panelists beforehand**
- b. Could possibly do two separate panels of City people and service providers
- c. Director offers OHR space as potential meeting space

17. **Lyndele will send email to the entire Commission with list document and explanation**

- a. List will contain Executive Directors of organizations, City people, outreach people, etc.

ii. Director asks Commissioners how OHR staff can best help these types of projects for the Commission

1. Could add recommendations of names to the list
2. Director reminds Commission that they can reach out to the OHR in between meetings if they ever need guidance

b. Housing Committee (began 7:24pm) – Chair: Wolfgang Keppley

i. Roll Call:

1. Wolfgang Keppley
2. Ernest Chambers
3. Lyndele Von Schill

ii. Affordable housing and the City budget forums

1. Chair would like to write a letter to the City about the budget process to ask them to prioritize short- and long-term affordable housing efforts in the City
 - a. Chair has already drafted a letter after meeting with Alex Ikefuna from the Office of Community Solutions
 - b. Believes what is needed is not necessarily more funding, but more flexible funding
 - c. Before, the letter was about searching for a novel solution, though Chair would like to change it to be more about reiterating to Council that affordable housing remains a pressing human rights issue in the City

- i. Could present letter ahead of 3/20 Budget Forum
 - 2. Commissioner asks whether letter could also add in points about emergency housing
 - a. Would require defining emergency housing (emergency shelter vs. long-term housing)
 - b. City does not currently pay for emergency shelter aside from grant funds
 - i. Though Director says that Commissioners can ask about this
 - c. Director says Commissioners could use letter and one-on-one meetings as a test run to learn about budget process and the Commission's ideas
 - i. Could talk to the Deputy City Managers, for example
 - 3. Commissioners should all look at Wolfgang's letter and share feedback and recommendations ahead of 2/16 regular meeting
- iii. Research question brainstorm and data exploration
 - 1. Chair says Commission could look at questions using census data about human rights discrimination, housing, or other topics pertinent to the City
 - 2. Chair has been looking at previous years' census data
 - a. Want to make sure to ask questions that the data can answer
 - b. Found yearly census data up to 2021 that provides about 4,000 counts biannually of individuals in the City on variables like income, racial identity, grant burden, cost of utilities, etc.
 - 3. Some research question examples could be how reported contract rent rates have changed over the past three years, how percentage of rent burden has changed over time, and of that group, how does that break down by income bracket, distribution of rent burden in Charlottesville, Albemarle County (or other county) statistics compared to the City of Charlottesville
 - 4. Point of research project in HRC bylaws seems to be that the role of the Commission is to provide new, localized knowledge on some kind of relevant topic
 - a. Commissioner says that it seems that the Chair's ideas are ideas that the HRC has already wanted to pursue anyway
 - 5. Resources that the Commission would need to pursue such a project would be
 - a. Would not be able to necessarily uncover the "why" of certain issues, but simply look at data to reveal issues that the City did not necessarily know about before
 - 6. OHR Outreach Specialist asks if organizing an event to get residents' personal accounts ahead of conducting the research project would be helpful

- a. Partnering with an organization that has direct contact with tenants
 - b. Could use the personal accounts of a person who is affected by an issue that the Commission is researching to further highlight the severity of the problem
- 7. Another idea is looking for languages spoken in Charlottesville from the census data to know ahead of the implementation of the Language Access Plan
- 8. Should also look at existing literature to find out what gaps should be filled

5. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

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

6. NEXT STEPS

- a. **Everyone**
 - i. **Look at letter to Council about City budget forums before 2/16 regular meeting**
 - ii. **Add to list with potential contacts with whom to have individual conversations ahead of town hall meetings**

7. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm