



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
February 16, 2023
City Space, 100 5th 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 meeting to order at 6:35 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Jessica Harris
 - ii. Ernest Chambers
 - iii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
 - iv. Mary Bauer
 - v. Wolfgang Keppley
 - vi. Andrew Orban
 - vii. 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 01/19/23
 - i. Motion to approve: Wolfgang
 - ii. Second: Ernest
 - iii. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 5
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 2

- iv. Motion to approve minutes passes

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. CHAIR UPDATE
 - i. Announces that a new Commissioner will be joining next month
- b. OHR STAFF REPORT (OHR Director)
 - i. There are some new data fields in the monthly staff report, such as duration of each visit
 - ii. Annual Retreat will be on March 16 in the afternoon

1. Meeting must occur at an approved City venue, so the retreat will be at Carver Rec
 - a. Reserved from 4pm to 8pm
- iii. 4/6 committee meetings will also occur in a smaller conference room from 6:30-8pm in Carver Rec
- iv. Commissioner asks about minutes spent with each case
 1. There is not yet a system in place, but OHR staff would like to gather as much information about cases and how much time certain tasks take place to determine how much time is being spent in certain areas (like Navigation) at the end of each month
 2. Commissioner suggests the app Toggl Track that allows users to time interactions with specific people
 - a. Could also track time on a more general level, like for administrative work or investigational work, instead of individuals
- v. Commissioner asks whether members of the Commission are able to join the meeting with Erik Steinecker in the following week
 1. Erik Steinecker is the Interim Director for HUD for Fair Housing Assistance Programs (FHAPs)
 2. Any Commissioner who wants to join the 2/21 Zoom meeting at 1pm can let Todd know, and he will send a link
 - a. Meeting will be about next steps after making Ordinance revisions
 - b. Wolfgang is interested in joining
- vi. Commissioner asks about other trends during the past couple of months
 1. Most cases have been housing related recently, especially navigational concerns (not necessarily complain concerns)
 2. Some people whom the OHR has assisted in the past have had some success recently
 - a. There are also some regular visitors to the Office who seek assistance for various concerns
 3. Another Commissioner asks whether there is another body in the City that should be helping with directing Charlottesville residents to relevant resources
 - a. This is why data collection is so helpful—the OHR can show Council how other bodies may better suit certain needs of city residents
 - b. Could lead to additional staffing within or outside of the City
 4. Commissioner asks if there is an end date for data gathering and how the Commission can assist
 - a. Tracking will likely be annual or semi-annual
 - i. Can translate time spent on tasks to actual dollar amounts
- vii. Commissioner asks whether the Erik Steinecker meeting will become a publicly-noticed HRC meeting if too many Commissioners attend
 1. Because this is Commission-related business, Todd will ask about how many Commissioners would be able to join
 2. Both Ernest and Wolfgang are interested in attending—OHR

Director will ask and email the entire Commission with updated information

3. Meeting will occur 2/21 at 1pm—Wolfgang can attend
- viii. Commissioner asks OHR Outreach Specialist about educational materials and whether the Commission can help support
 1. OHR Outreach Specialist says that Commissioner input is welcome on the project
 2. Told graphic designer to begin with a general “What is the Office of Human Rights and what does it do?” video
 - a. Working with intern Lily to draft and record a script, and Commissioners should let OHR staff know if they would like to help by providing feedback on the script or contributing their voice to the recording
 - b. Can use SharePoint to share the draft script with Commissioners
 3. Commissioner asks whether videos will also be in Spanish
 - a. OHR staff will look into this once they create the first video
 - b. There was a survey about language access that came from the Deputy City Manager for REDI
 - i. Asking department directors for their current language access plans and what resources are lacking
 - c. Recordings for the five protected activities are already completed
- ix. OHR Outreach Specialist updates
 1. Acknowledges attendance of Ernest and Wolfgang at the Haven’s open house
 2. Outreach events are still not regularly occurring, but are expected to pick up as the year progresses
 - a. Outreach Specialist can eventually begin to send out notices of which events she plans on attending every month to Commissioners
 - b. Received email today about Thomas Jefferson Planning District’s Coming Back Home conference, an all-day housing regional discussion in March
 - i. Can send out more information regarding dates and time; Outreach Specialist will be tabling for at least the beginning of the event
 - ii. OHR Director adds that more tickets for the event may be available if any Commissioners would like to attend
 - iii. Will occur Friday 3/24
 3. A couple City departments attended Housing Opportunities Made Equal, a community discussion during the past week with Home of Virginia, which does housing anti-discriminatory work
 - a. Was not recorded, but there may be a second discussion at a later date

5. WORK SESSION

- a. Annual Retreat planning
 - i. Chair summarizes meeting with Vice-Chair and OHR Director
 - 1. Chair has meeting with Right to Be training person tomorrow, so this could be something to do in the future (even if not at the retreat)
 - a. If it does not work for the retreat, could do a bead activity about privilege that Chair has done in the past
 - 2. Could also look into Community Resilience Initiative training regarding trauma
 - 3. Could talk about bylaws and Annual Report
 - 4. Most of the day will be about strategic planning for 2023
 - a. Goal to narrow down focus topics this year
 - 5. Could have food from Pearl Island, Angelique's, or Roots
 - ii. Commissioner asks if the REDI department has any models they have been employing at the City level that could be helpful for the HRC
 - 1. OHR Director says that the City hosted the Groundwater workshop, which has been the main City opportunity
 - 2. Deputy City Manager also sends other opportunities that are not necessarily specifically for City employees, such as the Building Black Power and Beyond White Fragility workshops
 - 3. Community Resilience Initiative has trainers in the City to whom Todd can reach out
 - iii. Commissioners choose to begin retreat earlier, at 4:30pm
 - 1. Commissioner suggests beginning as early as possible
 - iv. Commissioner asks how narrowing down the focus will occur
 - 1. Chair suggests that Commissioners come prepared to the retreat with a few ideas for focus topics
 - 2. Could also take the five focus topics from last year and choose what to do about them one by one
 - a. Chair will resend the 2022 focus topics
 - b. Community engagement and housing seemed to be especially important last year
 - v. Chair would like to complete a research project about the focus topic, which is part of the Ordinance
 - 1. Commissioner notes that a focus topic should probably be as specific as possible, more specific than "housing"
 - 2. Commissioner suggests putting together a spreadsheet of links to organizations who are doing something with housing in Charlottesville
 - vi. Commissioner suggests having actionable items, such as the town halls/panels that the Community Engagement Committee is planning
 - 1. Part of the retreat can be dedicated to coming up with action items under specific focus topics
 - 2. Also replies to previous Commissioner's comments by bringing up the document that contains the names of people with whom Commissioners would like to have one-on-one meetings
 - a. Outreach Specialist mentions that the Haven has a website section of educational resources with information and testimonials on housing

- i. Can email it out to Commissioners
 - vii. Last year's four focuses were the community equity assessment, community engagement, equity in City government review, and OHR capacity expansion
 - viii. Director says that if Commissioners already know they would like to focus on some aspect of housing, they can spend the time at the retreat narrowing this broader topic down
 - 1. Advises Commissioners to look into Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP) as an example of something Commissioners could directly impact from their role in City government
 - ix. Chair advises Commissioners to look over focus areas from the previous year and think about what they would like to prioritize in the coming year
 - 1. Commissioners will provide ideas about focus areas to the Chair by 3/3
- b. AD-HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES (Wolfgang reporting on behalf of Community Engagement and Housing Committees)
 - i. Community Engagement
 - 1. Planning for future expert panel/town hall
 - a. Sheet being circulated asks Commissioners to add names of people they think could be good panel members
 - b. Will do some kind of alternation or combination of town hall and panel format
 - c. In the process of deciding upon format and people to contact
 - ii. Housing
 - 1. Commission could add its voice to Community Budget Forums regarding affordable housing in Charlottesville
 - a. Opportunity on 3/22 for Commission to present its opinion about the City and affordable housing
 - b. Housing Chair circulated letter about affordable housing—will rewrite and send to Commissioners again
 - 2. Brainstormed ways to provide research question

6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

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

7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a. OHR Director
 - i. Current Chair of Virginia Association for Human Rights (VAHR), Curtis Porter, sent out invitation to get group together, though OHR staff were unable to attend
 - 1. This is something to potentially think about in the future
 - 2. Sue Lewis used to be the representative; now, if group were to start up again, it would be the OHR Director and HRC Chair as representatives

- b. Mary
 - i. Invites Commissioners to think about whether they would like to have a voice in the Charlottesville rezoning process
 - 1. The construction of additional housing is important when talking about affordable housing
 - 2. There has been misinformation in the community about rezoning
 - 3. Can be something to talk about during the retreat
- c. Wolfgang
 - i. Livable Cville is hosting online Homelessness in Charlottesville is a Housing Problem webinar on 3/1 at 6:30pm

8. NEXT STEPS

- a. Upcoming Commission meetings
 - i. Combined Committees meeting on 3/2 in person at CitySpace
 - ii. Annual Retreat on 3/16 in person at Carver Rec
 - iii. Combined Committees meeting on 4/6 in person at Carver Rec
- b. Everyone
 - i. Send Jessica feedback regarding focus topics for retreat by 3/3
- c. Wolfgang
 - i. Edit and re-circulate letter about affordable housing
- d. Todd
 - i. Ask about Commissioner attendance for meeting with Erik Steinecker
 - ii.
- e. Victoria
 - i. Send Commissioners draft script of OHR informational video using repointint
 - ii. Send Commissioners information about the Haven's educational resources on their website

9. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm