



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
May 18, 2023
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:30pm**

Click [HERE](#) to access rebroadcasts of past Human Rights Commission meetings on YouTube.

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1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Jessica Harris, called the hybrid meeting to order at 6:44pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Jessica Harris
 - ii. Ernest Chambers
 - iii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
 - iv. Mary Bauer
 - v. Wolfgang Keppley
 - vi. Kathryn Laughon
 - vii. Suzanne Lynn
 - viii. Andrew Orban
 - ix. Lyndele Von Schill (participating remotely with voting ability unconfirmed; joined 7:20pm)
- 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 Committee Meeting minutes from 02/02/23
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 5
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 3
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes
- b. Review of Regular Meeting minutes from 02/16/23
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 5
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 3
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

c. Review of Committee Meeting minutes from 03/02/23

i. Vote

1. In favor: 4
2. Opposed: 0
3. Abstained: 4

ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

d. Review of Regular Meeting minutes from 04/20/23

i. Vote

1. In favor: 5
2. Opposed: 0
3. Abstained: 3

ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

a. CHAIR UPDATE

i. No updates

b. OHR STAFF REPORT (HRC Director)

i. OHR Outreach and Administrative Specialist should return within the next week

ii. The OHR has been having some complex navigational service provision recently

iii. The CY2022 Report shows data from the past year that has been compiled and analyzed from both the OHR and HRC

c. CY2022 HRC and OHR Annual Report

i. This report is currently in the approval process for putting it onto the agenda of a City Council meeting, though edits are still possible

ii. Takeaways can be found in the executive summary section of the report

1. Trends have largely stayed the same, just with a further increased number of contacts throughout the year
2. Housing followed by employment continue to be the most common protected activity
3. Last year, the Office began to track Navigation, and this year, there will be additional tracking in type of Navigational service and time spent on each interaction

iii. Commissioner asks if the OHR tracks collaboration with other services

1. There were 57 different collaborators in 2022 (further explained in a later section of the report)

a. Community outreach collaboration and service provision collaboration are tracked separately

2. Going to begin tracking referrals for all organizations in 2023

3. Commissioner adds that knowing this data will help the Commission know which organizations are most relevant to the OHR/HRC

iv. Commissioner asks what the increase in service provision for the OHR could be attributed to

1. There was a surge in contacts after the pandemic

2. Exact factors of the increase in 2022 is unknown

a. Could be due to individuals struggling to access resources and the OHR's previous office being so centrally located

- b. Numbers this year seem to be a little lower already compared to last year
 - 3. OHR staff are tracking specific Navigational tasks and time spent on each to show how there is a lack of accessible mental health care, emergency housing support, and long-term affordable housing in Charlottesville, and how there should be additional services in the city that support these needs
- v. Commissioner asks whether the OHR receives so many inquiries and complaints about housing because of the Ordinance being so narrow
 - 1. The Ordinance derives its authority from state law (VA Fair Housing Law and the VA Human Rights Act, which also derive their authority from national law)
 - a. Currently is about as broad as it can be
 - 2. What amounts to a complaint is quite specific
 - 3. Continued outreach is important so that people understand the protected activities
- vi. Commissioner asks whether other departments report on the calendar year as opposed to the fiscal year
 - 1. Previous examples followed the calendar year
 - 2. Commissioner asks how following the fiscal year could impact asking for funding
 - 3. HRC Director also began sending quarterly reports to Council this year
 - 4. Data is tracked on a monthly basis, so OHR staff can compile fiscal year data whenever it is necessary (budget meetings are in November)
- vii. Commissioner asks if other departments do reports that are as thorough as the OHR's
 - 1. HRC Director does not know how other departments present their annual reports
- viii. Commissioner asks how the OHR serves individuals from Albemarle County
 - 1. There is no OHR or HRC in the county of Albemarle, and the Charlottesville OHR's jurisdiction extends only to the border of the city
 - 2. When an individual presents a concern that extends past the border, OHR staff sometimes get involved (though this can potentially take time away from concerns within the city)
 - 3. For complaints of discrimination in the county, the OHR can refer them to a state and federal agency that do have jurisdiction
 - 4. It is unknown how many individuals go to the OHR first as opposed to going directly to the state/federal agency
 - a. People go to the Charlottesville OHR because it is accessible
- ix. Commissioner asks about approval process for presenting to Council
 - 1. OHR/HRC is already approved to present; now the attachments just need to be approved
 - 2. Allyson Davies will read it over for legal aspects, then Michael

Rogers will approve it as attachments

3. Presentation will be June 5 at the 4pm work session
- x. HRC Chair asks about following up to Council about older resolutions the HRC has not heard back about
 1. OHR staff during the meeting will ask Council about the HRC's ACRJ legislative recommendations and the city-wide Language Access Plan
 - a. The Deputy City Manager for REDI has taken over efforts for the Language Access Plan, including sending out a department survey to determine current situation
 - i. Is currently in a procurement process
 - b. ACRJ's protocol's were mainly regarding COVID safety, but HRC is still interested in current protocols
- xi. Commissioner asks about current staffing needs and FHAP status
 1. HRC Director must make additional edits to the Ordinance, though priority has so far been the Annual Report
 2. Will need to make additional edits to approve with HUD, talk to legal one more time, then get it on City Council's agenda for 2-2-1s and the final agenda
 - a. This may be in the fall at the earliest
 3. Will likely bring up these steps at the Annual Report presentation
 - a. Chair asks for slides to be shared
- xii. Director will present the report with some general updates for 2023
 1. Anticipates questions about the Investigator position; OHR staff are currently discussing how to best meet staffing needs
- xiii. Commissioner asks for explanation of FHAP program, which is a workshare agreement with the Federal Housing Office through HUD
 1. Allows the OHR to handle things locally, has some financial incentives to build capacity, and allows for reimbursement for cases depending on how they are closed
 2. FEPA is the same situation with the EEOC, though there is less financial incentive
- d. HRC Rules & Procedures updates
 - i. Director goes through proposed changes to Rules & Procedures:
 1. 3.1 and 3.2. Changed language about election meeting and strategic planning meeting
 - a. There is a typo in this section about regular meetings; Director will fix this
 2. 4.5.1. Added ad-hoc committees to replace standing committees
 3. 4.2. Commissioner points out gendered language with Chair and Vice-Chair
 - a. Director will fix this
 4. 7. Added section about quarterly and annual reports
 - a. Director will add space between 7.1 and 7.2 and add that these responsibilities are required by the Ordinance
 - b. Commissioner asks about quarterly report requirement
 - i. The monthly, quarterly, and annual reports

come from the same set of data, so they are not too difficult to create

- c. Director would like to begin incorporating the HRC's work in monthly reports as it pertains to the Ordinance (the same setup as in the Annual Report)
- d. Director submits reports on behalf of both the OHR and HRC
- e. Quarterly reports are required by the Ordinance
- 5. Amendments section: Changed wording to accommodate new remote meeting City policy
- 6. No changes to Martha's Rules
- ii. Commissioners conduct straw poll and determine that further discussion is not necessary
- iii. Vote on Rules & Procedures with discussed alterations
 - 1. In favor: 9*
 - 2. Can live with: 0
 - 3. Opposed: 0
 - 4. *Lyndele's voting ability unconfirmed
- e. Work session updates (Kathryn reporting)
 - i. Discussed attending meetings of housing-related organizations to listen and bring information back to the Commission
 - ii. List of organizations is available on Teams so that Commissioners can sign up
 - iii. Will talk to Emily Dreyfus to determine whether it is appropriate for the HRC to send a liaison to CLIHQ
 - iv. **Mary will refine proposal for housing next steps**
 - v. Should add Housing Advisory Committee to list; meetings occur at 12pm on the third Wednesday of the month, though several meetings seem unavailable online
 - vi. Commissioners assign themselves to be liaisons for organizations:
 - 1. Jeanette -- Cville Plans Together
 - a. Is already on the steering committee
 - 2. Full list available on Teams
- f. Confirmation of next work session
 - i. Commissioners decide not to meet on 06/01/23
 - ii. In the meantime, Commissioners will attend meetings to report back at the next regular meeting
- g. Annual Report presentation logistics
 - i. **Todd will ask about how to access City Council meetings via Zoom and whether people can attend without needing to register in advance**

5. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

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

6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a. Jessica
 - i. There is cake for Ernest's birthday
 - ii. Wishes mothers a happy Mother's Day

- b. Kathryn
 - i. Reminds Commissioners that those attending other meetings should have some kind of small written report to attach to the agenda packet
 - ii. Can send them to the HRC group
- c. Wolfgang
 - i. Attended DSA meeting; housing group will have housing justice canvassing training event on June 10 at 1pm
- d. Todd
 - i. LAJC had their first eviction hearing event in the OHR office space last week
 - ii. Introduces new Executive Director of the Police Civilian Oversight Board Inez Gonzalez, who is attending as a member of the public
- e. Ernest
 - i. Publicly thanks community for watching over Burnley-Moran Elementary School

7. NEXT STEPS

- a. Mary
 - i. Refine proposal for housing next steps
- b. Todd
 - i. Confirm how to access City Council meetings
 - ii. Finalize Rules & Procedures with the following edits:
 - 1. 3.1 and 3.2: Remove typo about regular meetings
 - 2. 4.2: Remove gendered language
 - 3. 7.1 and 7.2: Add space between sections and add that these responsibilities are required by the Ordinance

8. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm