



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Work Session
August 3, 2023
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:30 pm**

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1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Jessica Harris, called the meeting to order at 6:41 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Jessica Harris
 - ii. Ernest Chambers (arrived 6:50pm)
 - iii. Mary Bauer (virtual)
 - iv. Wolfgang Keppley
 - v. Kathryn Laughon
 - vi. Suzanne Lynn
 - 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. WORK SESSION

- a. Draft City Council Recommendation for Charlottesville Salvation Army Expansion
 - i. HRC Chair drafted a letter to City Council recommending the Salvation Army expansion
 - ii. Commissioner added an additional sentence to end of letter the Commission wanting the expansion to be equitable and accessible
 - iii. Commissioner raises concerns about letter
 - 1. Prefers not to send letter having not heard back from Capt. Van Meter
 - 2. Letter to Capt. Van Meter requesting additional information had not been sent ahead of this meeting
 - 3. Says this Commission has the specific role to advocate for equitable and fair access to housing
 - 4. Has heard concerns about equity for LGBTQIA+ individuals and individuals with disabilities

5. Expresses that she is not comfortable with sending the recommendation to Council without explicitly addressing equitable access
- iv. Commissioner says that housing is critically important and is a human right
 1. Says the letter can address both need for housing and equitable access
 2. Another Commissioner agrees
 3. Chair would like to send the letter in a timely fashion; is fine with adding stipulation about equitable access
- v. Commissioner is concerned about individuals who may not feel comfortable submitting complaints to the OHR and would like to be proactive in ensuring they receive equal treatment
- vi. Commissioner says he has not heard concerns about the Salvation Army in Charlottesville besides a lack of beds; would like to make sure the Commission supports the expansion and addresses other issues in such a way that does not slow down the construction of the expansion
 1. Recognizes that the Salvation Army has mandates they must follow
 2. Another Commissioner clarifies that the Commission simply wants the Salvation Army to comply with standards they already set rather than specify them do something extra
- vii. Commissioner suggests adding a line in the letter specifically referencing LGBTQ+, non-English speaking, and disabled individuals
 1. Will specify all protected classes
- viii. Commissioner brings up specific concerns that there are separate apartments for LGBTQIA+ individuals without explanation of the context in which LGBTQIA+ individuals use the apartments, as well as specific language used when describing LGBTQ+ individuals
- ix. Commissioners workshop sentence about equitable and accessible emergency housing and discuss their concerns related to Capt. Van Meter's explanations during the previous meeting
- b. *Commission breaks from 7:12pm - 7:18pm*
- c. Continued draft letter discussion
 - i. Commissioners continue to workshop language in the draft letter specifying that the Commission wants the Salvation Army's service be equitable and accessible to specific groups of individuals
 - ii. Commissioners vote to send letter to City Council
 1. In favor: 7
 2. Opposed: 0
 3. Abstained: 0
 4. Motion to send letter passes
- d. Discuss plans for 08/17/23 panel session
 - i. OHR Director provided a list of potential speakers for the panel; Commissioners just must decide the format of the panel and which people to invite
 - ii. Commissioner says not all contacts will have legislative recommendations, so it should work to invite all of the people on the list
 - iii. Purpose of the session is to have community service providers share

what they would like City Council to focus on so that the Commission can create their own list of legislative recommendations to Council

1. Commissioner suggests that with short notice, invitees be allowed to send their recommendations via email
 - a. Should also be specific in framing and make sure invitees know the Commission is asking for what invitees think Council should be prioritizing
- iv. Commissioner suggests setting aside the first hour of the meeting for 6 speakers to present their legislative recommendations (including time for questions) for ten minutes each
 1. Intern says that the September meeting can additionally be used for the presentation session ahead of sending in the HRC's legislative recommendations to Council in October
- v. Presentation session will be six slots for ten minutes each for presentation and follow-up questions
 1. Speakers can attend in-person, on Zoom, or simply send their recommendations via email
 2. OHR staff will send out request with sign-up slots beginning at 6:45 pm
 3. Commissioner suggests asking participants to provide their recommendations in a bulleted list format or in a one- to two-slide presentation
 4. Use language that the Commission is asking speakers for what they would like City Council to prioritize, not necessarily what the organizations are themselves prioritizing in their community
 5. Also note to speakers that the first time slot is given as an estimate (assuming no members of the public speak during the beginning of the meeting), and that even if a speaker cannot attend, the Commission would still like to hear from them
- vi. Commissioners discuss the list of speakers
 1. Commissioner says that the City departments are not allowed to propose legislation in this context
 2. Commissioners decide that Councilor Payne will be invited (just not to speak), and the three listed Charlottesville departments will not be invited to speak, either
- e. Commission helps member of the public get connected to Zoom meeting
- f. Share ideas for group meeting norms
 - i. Chair describes her expectations for meetings (recorded in a document):
 1. Be respectful of the order of the meeting and avoid going back to points from which the Commission has already moved
 2. Raise hand before speaking and wait to be called on by the Chair
 - a. Short reactions without raising hand are okay
 3. Use "I" statements and be respectful of each other
 - ii. Commissioner suggests having name tags/cards with names and pronouns for meetings
 1. Another Commissioner suggests having mission statement on the back of name tags

- iii. Chair explains her intent for setting up group meeting norms
- iv. Commissioner suggests the list of norms be located somewhere easily viewable by Commissioners each meeting
 - 1. Intern suggests that rules be codified in a resolution or in the Rules & Procedures (could go over this as a plain-language resolution next meeting)
- v. Commissioner suggests that the Commission focus on being punctual for meeting start times to be respectful of potential viewers' time

4. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

a. PUBLIC COMMENT

i. Callum Von Schill

- 1. Asks whether disability in Charlottesville includes unhoused individuals who use drugs, because the ADA prevents employers from testing for alcohol use (because alcohol use is considered a disability)
- 2. Related to the comments made by the Salvation Army

b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

i. Commissioners do not have a response to the question at this time

- 1. Commissioner says the Commission should find this out
- 2. Chair says they can follow up with the Salvation Army
- 3. Commissioner clarifies that this is a question pertaining to the Ordinance, which may have a more complicated answer

ii. OHR Community Outreach Specialist says that substance use is covered as a disability by the Ordinance, but the individual must be in some type of recovery program (but this information need not be disclosed)

- 1. **HRC will reach back out to the Salvation Army asking whether they consider drug/alcohol use as a disability, as well as whether they test for it in their facilities**

5. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

a. Ginny (OHR Intern)

- i. Shares plans to conduct research project on VA and country-wide Human Rights Commissions
- ii. Notifies Commissioners she may be reaching out in the future for having research conversations
- iii. Invites Commissioners to share any requests or suggestions for the research

b. Kathryn

- i. Suggests exploring ways for the Commission to amplify voices in the current 10th and Page Dairy Market situation in the city

6. NEXT STEPS

a. Jessica

- i. **Ask Capt. Van Meter about the Salvation Army's consideration of drug/alcohol use as a disability, as well as whether they test for it**

b. Victoria & Ginny

- i. **Send out request for community service providers to speak at the 8/17/23 regular meeting or send recommendations via email**

7. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm