



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
November 16, 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 6:35 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Jessica Harris
 - ii. Ernest Chambers
 - iii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
 - iv. Suzanne Lynn
 - v. Andrew Orban
- 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. Commission is currently not receiving virtual public comment.
- b. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None
- c. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None

3. MINUTES

- a. Review of minutes from 10/19/23 Regular Meeting
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 5
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 0
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. CHAIR UPDATE
 - i. Chair and OHR staff attended the Virginia Association for Human Rights (VAHR) Conference held in Virginia Beach on 10/21/23
 - 1. VAHR members at the meeting voted to dissolve the organization, but individual Commissions agreed to convene informally in the coming years
 - 2. Recognizes that other Virginia Commissions have varying levels of resources available to them
 - 3. HRC Director adds that Northern Virginian Commissions

(Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William) all have enforcement powers; Commissions in Newport News, Richmond, and Virginia Beach do not have enforcement powers

- a. The Commissions that do not have enforcement powers focus mainly on community relations and community outreach like events, dialogues, commemorations, etc.
4. At the conference, there was a panel discussion for enforcement and non-enforcement Commissions, as well as guest speakers from the Attorney General's Office and the Norfolk EEOC local office
5. The VAHR voted to dissolve because it was difficult to organize each year, though the VA Beach HRC offered to host another gathering of VA Commissions, likely in June of next year

b. OHR STAFF REPORT

i. Outreach & Administrative Specialist

1. Data in agenda in packet is up to date and includes upcoming events that the Outreach Specialist is planning to attend
2. Will continue to send an email each week with events to attend
 - a. Keep Lily informed if there is another event to add
3. Is working on new brochures for tabling events; currently in the process of translating them
4. There will be four open seats in the Commission; deadline to apply is 12/08/23
 - a. Has been doing community recruiting, but thinks it would be helpful for a Commissioner to make public comment at a City Council meeting
 - i. Let Todd or Lily know if interested in attending Council meeting or if there is a suggestion regarding recruitment
5. The ten-year commemoration celebration will no longer be held as a separate event; instead, there will likely be a proclamation by City Council to recognize the ten-year anniversary of the HRC and the OHR
6. Commissioner says there is a Turkey Giveaway at Tonsler Park on Sunday, 11/19/23
 - a. Offers to take materials on behalf of the HRC/OHR
7. Commissioner asks whether there are one-on-one conversations occurring with specific individuals
 - a. Director says there is one applicant last time he checked, and has been in conversation with another individual regarding the Commission; urges Commissioners to have people they know reach out to the OHR
 - b. Recruitment so far has been more general, like with a News Flash announcement
 - c. Commissioner says a personal connection may be a valuable method of recruitment
8. Commissioner asks about Refugee Dialogue Series
 - a. This is a presentation that the OHR is doing for staff;

Commissioners may join, though the presentation is taking place the next day

- i. Todd will get link for event for those who want to attend

- 9. Commissioner asks about Westhaven Thanksgiving event
 - a. Outreach Specialist does not think tabling is an option, but she is planning to attend

- ii. Director

- 1. Database service data is up to date
- 2. In final stages of hiring for Investigator-In-Training position
- 3. OHR staff will be attending 11/20/23 Council meeting to present budget (presents during earlier 4pm session)
 - a. Only small change is about staffing capacity; OHR will also be sharing general goals for the next year
- 4. Received call from City Attorney Jacob Stroman regarding legislative recommendations
 - a. Mayor had questions about some of the specifics about the VA Landlord and Tenant Act
 - b. Are going to decide which recommendations to incorporate in their own legislative recommendations
 - i. Commission may hear from the Legislative Agenda committee if they have any other questions; Director can relay the Commission's questions if needed
- 5. Proclamation
 - a. Suggested by Deputy City Manager for REDI to formally acknowledge the ten-year anniversary
 - b. Staff will use proclamations from the past to create this one
 - i. Will forward its language to Chair and Vice-Chair and get it on a City Council agenda for December or January

5. WORK SESSION

- a. Action updates
 - i. December Regular Meeting will take the place of the December work session (12/07/23) because the Regular Meeting's normal time falls during the middle of the holidays
- b. 11/20/23 and 12/02/23 City Council Meeting Public Comments can be used for advertising Commissioner recruitment
 - i. Proclamation timing will depend on when draft is finished and when it gets put on the agenda by Council
- c. Officer Nominating Committee
 - i. Officer elections for Chair and Vice-Chair occur in January
 - ii. Andy and Jeanette volunteer for Nominating Committee to prepare slate to present during December meeting

6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. Commission is currently not receiving virtual public comment.
- b. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None

c. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- i. None

7. **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

a. Jeanette

- i. Zoning Ordinance is approaching a critical point; says that those who want to advocate for it may look at available resources and reach out to Council via a letter or public comment

b. Todd

- i. OHR staff will meet with ADA Coordinator Paul Rudacille about the logistics of holding a town hall for the ADA Transition Plan during the regular HRC January meeting on 01/18/23—may result in a longer-than-normal meeting

c. Jessica

- i. Suggests having individuals speak at work sessions next year to keep the Commission informed on matters of legislation

8. **NEXT STEPS**

a. Commissioners should contact Lily regarding upcoming outreach events

b. 11/20/23 City Council meeting

- i. Jessica will attend to bring up Commissioner recruitment

c. Next HRC Regular Meeting on 12/07/23

- i. Nominating Committee will present slate for officer elections

9. **ADJOURN**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm