



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
February 15, 2024
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:30 pm**

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1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Ernest Chambers called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Ernest Chambers
 - ii. Wolfgang Keppley
 - iii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
 - iv. Mary Bauer
 - v. Angela Estes
 - vi. Kathryn Laughon
 - vii. Suzanne Lynn
 - viii. 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. Public comment
 - i. None
- b. Commission response to matters by the public
 - i. None

3. MINUTES

- a. Review of Regular Meeting minutes from 01/18/2023
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 6
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 2
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. Chair update
 - i. Recognizes Andy and Jeanette for their years of work and dedication on the Commission
 - ii. Angela introduces herself and her background
 - iii. Chair and Vice Chair have been working with staff on the annual meeting; schedule information has been sent out
 - iv. Many meetings, etc. take place online; urges Commissioners to do what

they can to keep themselves informed

- b. OHR staff report
 - i. Outreach Specialist
 - 1. Just released the public-facing focus area survey; **asks Commissioners to share it with their networks**
 - a. Will close 3/4 at noon
 - 2. Still doing one-on-one meetings
 - 3. Events are in agenda packet, and will continue to email as they occur; outreach data is up to date
 - ii. Director
 - 1. Recognizes staff doing the EEOC's 32-hour Investigator training, meaning all staff can help each other on individual complaint work
 - a. Staff will also be attending the EEOC's New Intake Counselor training
 - 2. Close to another meeting with HUD and the City Attorney; goal is to present it to Council sometime this year
 - 3. Annual Report is basically completed; will have it in presentation form at the annual meeting
 - 4. Recognizes Andy and Jeanette for their service to the Commission
- c. Discussion of 03/07/24 work session and 03/21/24 regular meeting
 - i. Annual meeting is taking place 03/09/24
 - ii. Asks for thoughts on not holding the work session and regular meeting in March, given there is good work done on 03/09
 - 1. 03/21 meeting may occur in Carver Rec
 - iii. Commissioners decide to cancel 03/07/24 work session and reserve the 03/21/24 regular meeting (will possibly be canceled)
 - iv. Next work session would be 04/04/24; would likely have to be in Carver Rec (will possibly be canceled)
 - v. Will decide at annual meeting which meetings will be held
- d. Discussion of Annual Planning Meeting
 - i. Review agenda for the meeting
 - ii. Facilitator is Rachael Randall, who is local and has expertise facilitating strategic planning meetings
 - iii. Will be getting to know each other, laying out focuses for the year, thinking about legislative recommendations, identifying potential panelists for panel discussions
 - iv. Commissioner asks about having primary and secondary focus areas
 - 1. The document included in the agenda packet is a starting point, so the Commission can decide what kind of/how many focuses they will have during the meeting
 - v. Commissioner confirms they will receive relevant materials before the meeting
 - vi. Commissioner confirms this meeting will be recorded like normal meetings; asks whether it is possible to move around the room setup to allow for talking to each other for lengths of time
 - 1. Commissioner says she has heard that meeting broadcasts from this room have been mostly unintelligible

2. Communications team member says this problem should be resolved now
 3. **Chair will look into room setup**
 4. Commissioner suggests having simply an audio recording
 5. Commissioner says retreats have been left not recorded in the past, so there may not be a legal requirement—recording is mostly for public accessibility
 - a. Director adds that the recording helps with taking minutes, which are required (minutes can capture
 - b. Use instead use a digital recording to capture audio for minutes
 6. Commissioner asks about time for talking about Commission's annual research project being added to the schedule—a requirement presented in the Ordinance
 - a. Commissioner says the definition of “research” can be rather broad, which allows the Commission to do its research duty
 - b. Director adds that research could be contacting housing groups and inviting panelists to create some kind of report or project to Council; ultimately, the Commission is doing work in the community while communicating with Council
- e. New business
- i. Commissioner says it has been reported that the City has purchased a lot at Levy Ave. and Avon St.; there have been talks on whether it will be turned into a homeless shelter
 1. Could be useful for the HRC to voice support for construction of a homeless shelter
 2. Another Commissioner adds that the Commission has talked about before the lack of year-round emergency shelter before, so the City filling this gap would allow for more equity
 3. It is an accessible location
 4. **Chair will talk to Vice Chair and Director about potential draft letter of support**
 - ii. Commissioner asks what the status is on the situation following up with leaders from the Salvation Army
 1. The Salvation Army wanted to expand their shelter, and the Commission had questions for them regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion and language accessibility
 - a. Commission had been divided on supporting the project without more transparency on their policies; the HRC ultimately voiced their support for the expansion to Council with the request that the Salvation Army provides proof of their compliance with human rights law
 - b. The Salvation Army has since received the go-ahead from City Council
 2. Vice Chair says the Commission had received a follow-up from Capt. Mark Van Meter in August 2023 addressing Salvation

Army policies regarding HUD accessibility, LGBTQ+ identity, and Safe Space training they provide for service providers

- a. Will forward this letter back out, and if the Commission thinks the response is not sufficient, the HRC can take further action

5. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

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

6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a. Kathryn
 - i. There is a Livable Cville webinar on inclusive transportation—speaker is Veronica Davis, and there is someone from the City attending who can speak on City policies
 1. Occurring at 7pm on Wednesday, March 13; will send link
- b. Lily
 - i. Doing presentation the next day, 2/16, at SARA about the OHR/the Commission and its services
 - ii. Yesterday, 2/14, she did Wellness Bag deliveries at Westhaven through the Community-Based Recovery Support Network; primary purpose is information about different resources for support, as well as some personal hygiene products
 - iii. Survey has been posted on City social media pages, as well as a press release; is also being distributed through usual community outreach networks

7. NEXT STEPS

- a. Ernest (& Wolfgang)
 - i. Draft Levy/Avon homeless shelter support letter before annual meeting
 - ii. Look into room setup for annual meeting
- b. Entire Commission
 - i. Complete human rights survey and send it out to networks
 - ii. Do one-on-ones with Lily
- c. Andy & Jeanette
 - i. Exit interview with Lily and Todd

8. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm