



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
October 16, 2025
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:30 pm**

1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Heather Roberson Gaston, called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Present
 - 1. Heather Roberson Gaston
 - 2. Dawn Lawson
 - 3. Elizabeth Stark
 - 4. Jayson Whitehead
 - 5. Suzanne Lynn
 - ii. Absent
 - 1. Mariane Asad Doyle
 - 1. LD Perry
- 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 minutes from 09/18/2025
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 3
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 2
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. CHAIR UPDATE
 - i. Chair contacted Riaan Anthony, Director of Parks and Recreation, regarding the updated play surface allocation policies. Mr. Anthony said that the policies would be drafted by the end of the calendar year.
- b. OHR STAFF REPORT
 - i. Staff just returned from the 2025 International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) Conference
 - ii. City is currently in process of developing next year's budget
 - iii. Outreach and Service data in the OHR Monthly Report (available in the

Agenda Packet) are up to date

1. Staff updated the format of the OHR Monthly Report
2. If Commissioners would like to suggest changes to the format or the data included, please let staff know

5. WORK SESSION

- a. Discussion of local policy recommendations
 - i. Commissioners discuss existing resources for housing support including MACAA Hope House, The Crossings, Home to Hope, Region Ten vouchers, and the Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP)
 1. Commissioners discuss researching what, if any, funding relationships exist between the City and these programs
 - ii. Commissioners discuss economic mobility and the provision of public benefits including housing vouchers, food assistance, and other financial assistance
 1. Commissioner states that some residents struggle when their income increases enough to make them ineligible for food or housing supports, but still unable to afford the cost of living
 - a. Commissioners discuss researching this further to determine if adjustments could be made to existing programs or if new programs could be created to address this issue
 - i. Staff person states that the City is in the process of hiring an Economic Mobility Officer
 1. Suggests recommending to Council that the incoming Economic Mobility Officer look into this topic
 - iii. Commissioners discuss looking at other localities' approaches to addressing concerns around housing and homelessness
 - iv. Commissioners discuss proposed purchase of property at 2000 Holiday Drive for potential low-barrier shelter
 1. Commissioners express concerns about guests having access to wraparound services, food resources, mail services, and transportation
 2. Commissioners discuss the need for multiple shelter options throughout the city to meet the needs of the diverse unhoused population to include options for sheltering families, the elderly, and those with mental health and substance use concerns
 3. Commissioners suggest developing ways to accommodate medical and mobility challenges, having pets on site, and other unique needs
 - v. Commissioners discuss previously recommended "Right to Counsel" pilot program to provide legal representation to those being evicted in the city
 - vi. Commissioners make plan to draft a letter to City Council between meetings to be discussed in November
- b. Commissioners discuss officer elections
 - i. Commissioners decide not to hold an ad hoc election for the vacant Vice Chair position and defer that election to the annual officer elections

process in January

- ii. Heather and Elizabeth will serve on the Officer Nomination Committee and develop slate of nominees

- c. The next HRC meeting will be a Special Meeting held on November 6, 2025

6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT

- i. None

- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- i. None

7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

8. NEXT STEPS

- a. Heather

- i. Begin drafting letter on OneDrive or Word

- ii. Officer Nominating Committee duties

- 1. Develop slate of nominees for presentation to full Commission

- b. Elizabeth

- i. Assist with drafting letter

- ii. Officer Nominating Committee duties

- 1. Develop slate of nominees for presentation to full Commission

9. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm