



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Special Meeting
November 6, 2025
Virtual Meeting Conducted on Zoom
6:30 pm**

1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Heather Roberson Gaston, called the Zoom meeting to order at 6:41pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Present
 - 1. Heather Roberson Gaston
 - 2. Dawn Lawson (arrived 7:09pm)
 - 3. Elizabeth Stark
 - 4. Jayson Whitehead
 - ii. Absent
 - 1. Mariane Asad Doyle
 - 2. Suzanne Lynn
 - 3. 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. WORK SESSION

- a. Discussion of local policy recommendations
 - i. Commissioners discuss whether to include a small number of key recommendations or a larger number of recommendations
 - 1. Commissioner states that other sources are likely making similar recommendations and additional detail may not be needed from the HRC
 - 2. Commissioners determine by consensus that a more concise list of recommendations may be most strategic at this time
 - ii. Director shares Chief Prosperity Officer's feedback on draft recommendations, including:
 - 1. Proposed shelter at 2000 Holiday Drive
 - a. Consideration of ADA compliance
 - i. Transportation and access to shelter
 - 1. Commissioner states that if the proposed shelter is serving three meals per day and providing mail services,

- that may reduce demand for transportation
 - ii. Elevator on site
- b. Discussion of services offered on-site
 - i. May provide beds and private spaces for medical needs
- 2. Consideration of alternative options for housing, including:
 - a. Permanent supportive housing
 - b. Options for people that do not qualify for permanent supportive housing
 - c. Options for those making 0-20% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- 3. City is currently recruiting for Economic Mobility Officer
- 4. Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP)
 - a. Difficult to determine specific dollar amount needed at this time
- iii. Commissioners discuss alternative forms of shelter for people not accommodated by the 2000 Holiday Drive site
 - 1. Commissioner raises concern about insufficient options for families experiencing homelessness
 - a. Short term solutions needed
 - b. Staff member shares that Salvation Army is looking to provide family shelter options following construction
 - i. Commissioner asks if the HRC can invite a representative from the Salvation Army to speak to the HRC
 - 1. Another commissioner agrees
 - 2. Staff person suggests also meeting 1:1 or emailing to receive answers more quickly
 - 2. Commissioners discuss Cherry Avenue site
 - 3. Commissioner suggests exploring any options for interim shelter while the 2000 Holiday Drive site is under renovation
 - a. Another commissioner agrees and emphasizes that this need is especially great for families
 - b. Another commissioner states that even if there were an interim space, staffing that site would also have to be considered
 - c. Commissioner asks about hotel stays for families experiencing homelessness
 - i. Commissioner states that the City's hotel stay program covers 2 weeks, which is very short term when families generally need several weeks of intensive support and case management to return to stable housing
 - 1. Commissioners discuss recommending expanding the length of time covered
 - 2. Commissioner states that eligibility for

hotel stays for people with health concerns is also very restrictive

- ii. Commissioner suggests program to provide a form of insurance that encourages landlords to rent to homeless families with poor credit history by covering lost rent or damage to a certain amount
 - 1. Commissioner suggests doing this as a pilot program to determine effectiveness

- 4. Commissioner suggests inviting City Councilors, City Manager, and representatives from the Salvation Army and People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry (PACEM) to an HRC meeting to discuss these topics
 - a. Another commissioner agrees
 - b. Commissioners discuss collaborating with the City's Housing Advisory Committee

- iv. Commissioners discuss recommending that the incoming Economic Mobility Officer look at benefits cliffs and the needs of Asset-Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households
- v. Motion to approve the local recommendations and finalize draft letter
 - 1. Vote
 - a. In favor: 4
 - b. Opposed: 0
 - c. Abstained: 0
 - 2. Motion to approve local recommendations passes
- b. Commissioners discuss next steps
- c. Nominating Committee is polling commissioners for interest in serving as officers in 2026

4. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

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

5. NEXT STEPS

- a. All commissioners
 - i. Provide input on wording for local recommendations

6. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm