Berea Human Rights Commission

Regular Meeting

June 4, 2018, 6:30 PM

CITY HALL, COMMUNITY ROOM  
212 CHESTNUT ST, BEREA, KY 40403.

Present: Dr. Mim Pride (Chair), Dr. Janice Blythe (Secretary), Peter Hille, Randy Dinsmore and Rev. Carla Gilbert (Acting Vice-Chair).

Absent: Gene Stinchcomb, Eef Fontanez (Treasurer)

Eric Hogsten (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: None

Summary of Actions Taken:

* Meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by the Chair.
* The agenda was presented and APPROVED.
* Announcements.
  + Eric Hogsten will be out for the week. Will check emails and let the Commission know of any events.
  + July 9th is the next monthly meeting. June 26- July 28 Pride will be out-of-town; Pride will also be gone for the August meeting. It was moved by Hille and seconded by Blythe that Rev. Gilbert will serve as acting chair for the August meeting.
* Motion to approve minutes from the May meeting was made by Hille and seconded by Blythe. Minutes were approved. A change of location (within City Hall) was noted in the minutes. Another group met in the originally cited location announcing this meeting at City Hall.
* April/May Treasurer’s Report was given; approved and see the attached copy.
* There was discussion regarding the collaborative summer project that is occurring between the BHRC and the Carter G. Woodson Center (CGWC) at Berea College. Blythe was asked to inform Dr. Alicestyne Turley, Director of the CGW Center, that $300 has been budgeted by the BHRC to cover supplies/duplication/books/other items to support archival research, conduct interviews, and other activities needed to complete this phase of the history project being conducted over the summer (2018). It was also decided that the center would pay for supplies initially, and then submit invoices to the BHRC for their expenses. This procedure should work more smoothly with our process of submitting our expenses within the city government structure. Discussion also ensued regarding the purchasing of a video camera to support the commission’s documentation of our educational work and record collections. Peter Hille agreed to provide more detailed information about this piece of equipment.
* It was moved by Blythe and seconded by Hille that $300 be budgeted to cover expenses incurred by the CGWC at Berea College and that $600 be conditionally approved to acquire the video camera. The motion passed.
* The Chair will do follow-up with Cheryl Chasteen and Mayor Connelly regarding policies and procedures needed for the acquisition of contracts, supplies, and other needs identified by the commission. We wish to be certain that we are being consistent in the purchasing procedures as directed by the City.

**New Business**

* Discussion was made that the commissioners should revisit and review activities related to concerns and our ongoing progress to address them year-to-date. When noted, requests and concerns will not only be revisited but will also be added to future agenda for our meetings if greater clarification or documentation is needed.
  + Submitted request by Ali Blair for the Freedom of Information Request (FOIR). Chair Pride informed the group that all such requests must go initially to the City Clerk. This request was made to better inform the respond to community concerns raised about accessibility, parking, and other disability issues associated with the Levitt-AMP Friday night events held in Old Town during 2017. Eric Hogsten noted that he has spent a great deal of time working through the city’s procedures to address this request.
  + Chair Pride commented that “we explored the city’s responsibilities for parking and signs. Then we found that they did do this.” Chair Pride noted that there was evidence that the City was addressing some of these issues. Representatives from the BHRC held conversations with city leaders to gain more knowledge about what was currently being done to address some of these issues. Further discussion among commissioners revealed that more details about these conversations and the information that the city officials provided needed to included in our minutes. We also reflected and now document that it was Peter Hille who suggested primary recommendations about a training session for considering disabilities more completely in our activities that occur throughout our community, not just the Friday Night Levitt events. Numerous community events occur throughout the year. As a consequence education and training about such issues as improved accessibility, parking, disability considerations, and related topics need to occur for all aspects of our community. Further, Hille suggested that we pursue existing resources to acquire a trainer/educator/speaker to lead a session. Finally, a recommendation was developed and presented at a City Council public meeting. Lessons learned by the BHRC:
    - Conclusions from our discussion reveal that as we have transitioned in our procedures within the commission, we recognize our continued need to document and include more specific details, reflect back, and be certain that we have not missed any vital elements for such requests and concerns that are brought to the attention of the commission. More specific details of what we do outside of meetings to address concerns, complaints, and issues need to be documented in our minutes. It was a beneficial and enlightening discussion.
* John G. Fee Award Updates
  + The deadline for submitting nominees for this award is July 27th. The commission has revised our process and forms. Eric Hogsten has reviewed the press release and forms being posted. The application for 2018 John G. Fee Award will be posted online, Facebook, added in the Berea Citizen, and the Richmond Register.
* Commissioners participating in the Levitt AMP events tabling/booth occurred. Commissioners signed up for Friday night events in July, August, and September. Discussion ensued about the specific block of time that we will be available to provide educational material at our booth. Commissioners reviewed the dates and began to sign up for specific Friday evenings in these months.

Old Business

* Office Report by Eric Hogsten, Administrative Assistant
  + Complaint was received on May 7th and was sent to the Kentucky Human Rights Commission (KHRC) the same day. To date, Hogsten has not heard back from the person who made the complaint yet, nor has the (KHRC) received any additional follow-up from the person submitting the original complaint.
  + Action has been taken to finalize the open records request. The response has been turned in to Cheryl Chasteen.
* Update for “Get on the Bus” Project conducted by the Lexington Housing Authority in April 2017. The summary description and documentation of this community educational event is being finalized by Dr. Jackie Burnside (Professor and Academic Chair) and Sharyn Mitchell, (Research Associate at Hutchins Library) at Berea College. We anticipate receiving their report soon, hopefully in time to be included on the agenda for the July 9th BHRC meeting. Chair Pride will prepare an invoice to be submitted to the city in anticipation of this July presentation by local project leaders Burnside and Mitchell.
* Status of the student summer internship with the BHRC—follow-up report
  + Chair, Pride, Hille, and Blythe met with Dr. Alicestyne Turley at the CGWC on campus at Berea College. Blythe informed the commissioners that on a technical sense an internship is not occurring since student proposals could not be submitted in time to meet the college deadline in April. Moreover, students will not be receiving academic credit for their involvement. Rather, this is a collaborative project in which the students will conduct archival research based on the history of human rights in Berea, race relations and its history at Berea, the formation of the first Berea Human Rights Commission following the racial incident 50 years ago and other information that will provide more education about this 50-year incidence. Their work will support some of our exploration [the BHRC] of the history of human rights in Berea Our conversation continued about the most appropriate method to obtain and provide this education to our community. Oral histories were discussed, with a particular focus on oral histories being conducted on Loyal Jones, Robert Shaffer, and others recognized as recipients of the first John G. Fee Award and the positive action taken by members of our community. Rev. Carla Gilbert commented that the BHRC should pick up the task to conduct oral histories. Chair Pride, Hille, and Blythe disclosed that Dr. Turley has a lot of energy and interest for this project. It was decided that further conversation should occur with Dr. Turley regarding potential oral histories which might be conducted. Blythe will engage in more conversation about what Dr. Turley thinks about conducting oral histories and whether or not this could be a part of this collaborative work this summer.
* Our progress on community concerns about disability and our plans for a more extensive American Disabilities Act (ADA) Training Session
  + In a previous meeting, Commissioner Gene Stinchcomb suggested that we approach the League of Cities to determine if they could offer resource persons who might be available to conduct such a training session. Since the BHRC was unsuccessful in finding other persons, this inquiry was pursued with the League. Hence, the League of Cities has agreed to provide an individual, Ms. Cassie Cooper, who will conduct this training session. The League has requested more details about the content to be provided for this training session. The Chair of the BHRC will continue the coordination to finalize this training session. It was also suggested that since Commissioner Bruce Fraley expressed his interest in working with the commission to finalize the budget needed, along with addressing other essential elements to conduct this training session, we should ask him to share our thinking with other City Councilpersons. We will also ask Commissioner Fraley to provide us with topics and specific content that City Councilpersons, including himself, feel that they need to acquire from this training session.

These are salient points that the commissioners feel should be included in this training session (these are in no specific order of importance but emerged in our discussion)

* + - A brief overview of the American with Disabilities Act, with emphasis on all forms of disabilities included in this law and not focus only on physical disabilities
    - Identify specific requirements for public accommodations for our community events
    - General format for the training period: an abstract, introduction to frame the direction, and limit the training session to approximately 90 minutes. Offer this as a work session for the City Council and invite the public. Location and tentative dates to be discussed at the next meeting.
    - Introduce best practices (beyond minimum requirements/practices) which will address what cities are required and what cities can do; what businesses can and should do; extensive considerations for special events that are covered in our Berea community, including campus events for the College, the hospital, festivals, and so forth
    - Highlight what other cities are doing to address issues identified here in Berea by our community and other issues being addressed in other communities. Identify specific resources utilized by other cities.
    - Consider individualized needs by members of the community, such as accommodations for service animals; ways to support hearing and other communicative needs.
    - Discussion of grandfather clauses which might be included in future decisions made by the City of Berea to support businesses and non-business needs
    - Conduct a video-recording of this educational event (either recorded by the League of Cities or the BHRC)—to be determined
    - What requirements that are addressed in the law? What available resources are available in Berea? What additional resources are needed to improve community concerns (addressing limited resources in time, funds, and other concerns potentially raised by small businesses)
    - Include a Q&A Period
* Follow up on history of Human Rights in Berea
  + Discuss archival information that Dr. Turley and her students are able to acquire
  + Oral histories
  + Continued conversation to explore this through educational research

Public Comment—there were no comments from the public at this meeting. No visitors attended.

8:00 P.M. MOTION MOVED and CARRIED to ADJOURN.

Prepared By:

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[Eric Hogsten, AA]

Administrative Assistant

Minutes Recorded: June 4, 2018

Minutes Approved:

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[Mim Pride, Chair]

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