Berea Human Rights Commission

Regular Meeting

July 9, 2018, 6:30 PM

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

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

Absent: Gene Stinchcomb.

Eric Hogsten (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: None

Summary of Actions Taken:

* Meeting was called to order at 6:28 p.m. by the Chair.
* The agenda was presented and approved as distributed.
* Announcements.
  + Chair Mim Pride will not be here for the next meeting. Rev. Carla Gilbert will be acting chair for the coming meeting.
* Minutes from the June meeting were approved.
* April/May Treasurer’s Report
  + The report was not ready for the meeting due to end of year clerical process and procedures conducted by the city. The treasurer’s report will be presented at the next meeting of the commission.

**New Business**

* Levitt AMP Tabling Update
  + For the first Friday night event, the Berea Human Rights Commission (BHRC) provided a booth from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The BHRC booth was personed by Eric Hogsten, Administrative Assistant; Mim Pride, Chair of the BHRC, Randy Dinsmore, member, and Peter Hille, member of the BHRC.
  + It was decided that the commission would present our educational booth only for the first Friday night events for August and September. Commissioners decided to revise their schedule of participation for the first Friday sessions for August and September.
* John G. Fee Award Updates
  + We currently are receiving nominations for this award. Currently, the chief of the Berea Police Department has submitted a nomination. Other nominations are expected from the community. At this point we have not yet received nominations for the recognition of Youth Leadership.
* Update on accessibility complaint 2017
  + Two members of the community made a direct inquiry to the KHRC regarding the FOIR report; the KHRC did not have on their records that a report was presented and acted upon by their office. During our meeting Chair Pride indicated that she had verification to document that the FOIR was sent to the KHRC. The time on the email from the BHRC was also noted and a blind copy had been sent to Juan Pena at the KHRC. Chair Pride also commented that there is a question of whether the lack of a formal complaint in the query from community members might have resulted in a lack of record keeping that includes such inquiries. We will need to check on the procedure for this with Juan Pena at the KHRC.
* Report of tour Old Town by Councilman Bruce Fraley to continue our pursuit to address previous community complaints regarding accessibility at events there.
  + The councilman set up a tour last week in Old Town during the Levitt AMP Event. Comments from this tour reveal the following:
    - There is adequate parking spaces but there are no signs to reveal the location of these spaces
    - Parking signs are obscure, somewhat hidden and not revealed on the front space for parking
    - No markings for handicapped restrooms
    - Side-walks for the most part seem to be in reasonable condition; no major problems
    - There needs to be collaborative work with the City Council to explore ways to continue to improve accessibility in this area for community events.
    - Commissioners (at our meeting) indicated that a long-range plan, including budgetary needs and priorities, needs to be developed for public areas throughout the city, including the Farmers’ Market area and other areas in addition to Old Town. The commissioners agreed that work should be done to bring about real changes.
    - Mim Pride completed a detailed letter of her observations at Old Town, Jefferson Street, Berea Community School, and Indian Fort. Her observations also included comments that Berea College provides a golf cart to transport individual from parking to major events on campus. She further commented that it is not generally possible to see accessible parking from the street. She shared a copy of her letter and discussed future plans for sharing her observations in a more formal way to Mr. Caudill, with the City Council, and other city leaders. A copy of this letter is attached to the minutes.
    - Commissioners also noted that attention should be given to accommodate hearing needs and not just mobility concerns.
* Report 2018 Human Rights Campaign (HRC): Municipality Equality Index (MEI)—A score rating cities selected by this national organization (the HRC). General information about this survey and the process described by the Human Rights Campaign is offered below.
  + The city of Berea was selected for the annual review (MEI) of cities by this national organization, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). The MEI survey is an annual nationwide evaluation of municipal or city laws, policies, and services that affect the LGBTQ community. The score is based on publicly available resources. This organization is a civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Americans. Annually, specific cities across the country are selected for scores or ratings. Later this year an official publication will be made available to the city of Berea. When the city receives its official score or rating and the information is provided to the BHRC, the commission will report information to the city leaders and the community as a part of our community report process.
  + Score in our minutes. We can report this to the Council.

Old Business

* Office Report:
  + Administrative Assistant Eric Hogsten is in progress of working with Cheryl Chasteen to acquire a camera through Amazon. The acquisition of this equipment has been approved by City Manager Randy Stone. Other needed supplies are being ordered through usual procedures of the city.
  + Update for the “Get on the Bus Project” the emphasis on the history of housing in Berea, conducted earlier by tour conducted by the Lexington Housing Authority.
* The project is not completed yet. In the course of completing the project, Dr. Jackie Burnside and Ms. Sharyn Mitchell found more stories and other material they wish to include. Chair Pride will be in contact with these researchers to complete all the necessary paper work for the city in order to finalize the completion of this project. The commission will then review and report later to the community about the official documentation of this special emphasis to educate the community about Berea’s history of housing.
* The American Disabilities Act (ADA) Training Session
  + It was revealed that the League of Cities cannot offer staff support for this training session. Chair Pride indicated that she will conduct appropriate follow-up with some additional leads; she will also work with Councilman Bruce Fraley to provide input from the City Council to finalize the session. Councilman Fraley suggested tentative dates in July for the working session and that the training session occur at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall. Other commissioners offered suggestions to include a representative from Berea Community Independent Schools (Jennifer Whitt, Director of Special Education) and the Madison County Schools (the individual associated with special education and exceptional children). Commissioner Eef Fontanez will make the initial contact with the representative at Berea Community Schools Janice Blythe will contact the Madison County Schools to determine if anyone can also participate in this training session.
* Another complaint (a non-formal complaint was made, but a notice was sent to the BHRC in July. Because the commission requires a formal complaint and because we cannot act on the nature of this complaint, our response provided more general information
  + Via email response we indicated our specific procedure for filing a formal complaint
  + We informed them of our regular monthly meeting dates and time and that the public is invited
  + Our encouragement to submit a formal complaint to the BHRC
* Follow up on history of human rights in Berea
  + Dr. Turley has been conducting interviews. She has selected somethings for students, in the manner of archival work. She wants to get 6-8 orals history completed by the time Janice comes back. She has contacted others. She has been doing these by herself with her own equipment. Students are aware of how she is conducting oral histories, but she is not allowing them to do them. She has made the effort to get in contact with the community. Would bringing people together make it easier to interview? She is trying to find a better way of solicitation those facts from people. She is challenging herself to explain it like a story. Working on getting ahold of the Court Records. Did have a group of individuals meet at the Carter G. Woodson Center. Who lived in Berea, she did not get that much information there as she had hoped.
  + Janice Blythe had a follow-up conversation with Dr. Alicestyne Turley at the Carter G. Woodson Center regarding the current research she is conducting. Blythe informed Dr. Turley that the BHRC has allocated $300 to cover supplies, duplication, and any other archival support for conducting oral interviews, reviewing public reports, and other archival information which will collectively expand the history of human rights in Berea. Dr. Turley is in the process of obtaining archival information at Hutchins Library, obtaining oral histories (she is conducting these), and reviewing other public records to support this research and the written narrative she will provide to the BHRC later this year. Dr. Turley will provide more specific information about her results from this summer project.
* Commissioners expressed concerns regarding the action of immigration officials to separate families at the southern border, the lack of a clear path forward for these actions, our potential role in this concern as a human rights commission, and the United States removing itself from the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Questions were raised regarding future declarations of a resolution. We will need to have more conversation about how we might choose to address this concern as a commission.

Public Comment—there were no public comments.

7:52 P.M. MOTION MOVED and CARRIED to ADJOURN.

Prepared By:

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[Eric Hogsten, AA]

Administrative Assistant

Minutes Recorded: July 9, 2018

Minutes Approved:

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[Mim Pride, Chair]

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