

Berea Human Rights Commission
Regular Meeting
October 01, 2018, 6:30 PM
CITY HALL, COMMUNITY ROOM
212 CHESTNUT ST, BEREA, KY 40403.

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

Absent: Eef Fontanez (Treasurer)

Eric Hogsten (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: Ed Fredriksson; Dr. Jackie Burnside, and Ms. Sharyn Mitchell

Summary of Actions Taken:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by the Chair.
- The agenda was presented and approved as distributed.
- Announcements.
 - September Report was postponed until Finance Director, Susan Meeks, sends the report.
- Minutes from the August Meeting and Special Meeting Minutes
 - Commissioner Janice Blythe handed out the minutes for August and the Special Meeting Minutes in September. Some further editing was identified for the August meeting and will need to occur. Approval of this editing will occur at the next meeting. It was moved by Commissioner Rev. Carla Gilbert that with revisions/editing the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peter Hille. Minutes of the September 4 Special Meeting, with necessary corrections were approved (motion by Commissioner Hille and seconded by Commissioner Stinchcomb). These approved copies of minutes will occur at a future meeting.

New Business

- Social Media Controversy about women
 - A lengthy discussion occurred among the commissioners regarding the social media controversy and the conflict that is current emerging in our community. We revisited previous comments made by councilpersons and others within the community who insist that there are no problems of discrimination and intimidation of anyone within our community. As commissioners we continue to listen to complaints from individuals, families, and groups in the community, offer limited support to those who have been offended and wish to file complaints, work with the Police Department about effective ways to help individuals report criminal complaints against them, hear negative comments about Berea College students in the community, and acknowledge other criticism which has been levied against this commission in “Letters to the Editor” in the

local paper. Nevertheless, the commission should continue to exercise the charge given in the ordinance to this commission. As a commission we have our concerns regarding the support that we have from city councilpersons. As a result of some of the concerns raised about our September 7th ten-minute presentation at the Levitt AMP Friday Event (the 50th year recall of the 1968 racial incident and subsequent formation of a human rights commission shortly thereafter), this current commission (the BHRC) feels obligated and committed to address some of the larger issues that are associated with some of our historical events, e.g. in 1968 and other times, as well as current controversy that is associated with a disrespect for women and their rights in the current social media controversy.

Commissioner Stinchcomb offered comments about first amendment considerations for the current community issue. He also stated that it is public policy to have equal treatment for all individuals. Moreover, Stinchcomb and Dinsmore commented that the BHRC should not avoid addressing this situation in an appropriate and intentional manner. Commissioner Blythe indicated that although she has serious concerns, we should be respectful of our community leaders and not target any particular official. Also, Blythe indicated that while she wishes to avoid a disrespectful response as a retaliation of negative comments made about deaths of some Berea College students and other conflicts within the college in general, this larger issue of disrespect to women needs to be addressed by this commission. Chair Pride acknowledged that there is always a possibility that citizens in the community might choose to address some of these larger issues separate from city officials and even the commission itself. Nevertheless, as the BHRC, we need to consider our approach to this current issue. Chair Pride also expressed an anticipated emotional time at the forthcoming Council Meeting, but she also indicated that the BHRC should enforce the city ordinance given to us. Commissioner Rev. Carla Gilbert reminded the group that discrimination against women is the issue here. Further, gender discrimination is not legal. Regardless of the source of this controversial message posted in the social media, this is an unacceptable act. Commissioner Hille emphasized the tremendous amount of information that is available from our work for the September 7th Friday night presentation. He questioned how we might thread some of the general information we now possess with this current issue for human rights. He questioned if we should consider our current situation from the perspective of an ethical issue as opposed to a human rights issue. Hille also emphasized that this current controversy is not related only to the BHRC, but also to the City of Berea. Dinsmore joined in the spirit of comments offered by Hille and our need to address the charge we have received from the city ordinance. Commissioner Hille then reviewed our charge and ordinance administered to us by the City Council.

Regarding this current social media controversy, there is some need to consider if this controversy is or should be considered as an ethical issue or as a human rights issue.

The discrimination or disrespectful acts against women is supported by our charge in public policy and the Berea City ordinance—22.700 – 22.708. This ordinance states that “it is the public policy of the City of Berea to promote fair treatment for all people” and that the Human Rights Commission “shall encourage fair treatment and equal opportunity for all people. . . and shall promote mutual understanding and respect among all economic, social, racial, religious, sex, age and ethnic groups.. . “ We have concluded after reviewing this charge in the ordinance to this BHRC, along with considering evidence of other larger issues within the community in specific time intervals, that this current social media controversy is a violation against women and girls. As a commission, we must assume our role to support our charge expressed in this ordinance. It was unanimously decided that Commissioner Peter Hille would draft a statement, have it reviewed by the chair and present the statement at the forthcoming City Council meeting. Chair Pride assumed responsibility to add our statement to the city meeting agenda. She also commented that there is evidence that other members of the community will also express their concerns regarding this controversy at the council meeting.

Old Business

- o Office Report:
 - o Office Hours for Wednesdays needs to be changed to 1-5pm
- o Community Forum for Employment of Disabled Persons- led by Commissioner Randy Dinsmore.
 - o Commissioners Dinsmore and Blythe have continued working on this forum. Randy has been talking with the potential forum leaders, Ms. Whaley of the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute. The forum will be held October 30 in the community conference room in the basement of City Hall. The forum is about national disability employment awareness month. This event will occur at minimum cost to our BHRC budget. There will also be a person with autism who will speak at the forum. There may be involvement with a representative of Occupation therapy at ECU. Also, Steve Lawson, Vice President for Human Resources at Berea College has also be contacted. The program of the forum will last approximately 90 minutes.
- o The “Get on the Bus Housing Project”—conducted by Dr. Jackie Burnside and Ms. Sharyn Mitchell
 - o For their presentation, Dr. Burnside and Ms. Sharyn Mitchell presented an official notebook of their research from this housing project that occurred in April of 2017. The information provided in their notebook can support the commission’s education about housing in Berea in several different ways. Members of the commission expressed our

appreciation for their work. The presenters elaborated on specific details in the notebook which represent the core of their progress in this project. They attempted to recreate the history of housing throughout Berea as much as possible. In preparation of the actual program that preceded the bus tour, they have offered some highlights of the emails and communication that occurred between the Lexington Housing Authority and the Berea Planning Committee. Both Dr. Burnside and Ms. Mitchell were the narrators of the bus tour around the city. Some of their narrative information on the bus ride was shared with participants, along with a podcast of the last 2/3rd of the trip. Both presenters expressed the tremendous amount of history that they learned by conducting this project “It was a great tour to redo.” From all this information the commissioners agreed with the presenters that we should develop a great deal of this information in a PowerPoint. The presenters also expressed their excitement about Dr. Turley’s work over the summer. It is the plan of these scholars to be able to include some of her research for future information to promote local tourism for students and families who come to Berea College, for all visitors to our community, as well as for continued learning within our own community. In order for the larger community to know more of the work that this commission and community work that is currently being done, these presenters also included selected samples from Dr. Alicestyne Turley. Such a partnership could include photographs along with stories, conducted interviews, etc. and incorporate this information into a book which be utilized in our community schools and other community organizations. Following this formal presentation, the commissioner took a photograph with our presenters as they received their contractual fee from the city. Plans to locate this notebook, possibly add some information to our website, develop a Power point, and develop other information to be distributed will be discussed in a future meeting.

- o Ms. Sharyn Mitchel expressed her appreciation to the commission for the support that has been provided for the Middletown Consolidated School Historic Marker which was dedicated in August. The community members who attended the Middletown Consolidated Elementary School through 1964, some of whom still reside in Berea, have been encouraged by the assistance of the BHRC to preserve this history for the community. Ms. Mitchell expressed their collective appreciation.
- o Report of Housing Training by the Kentucky Human Rights Commission- Chair Mim Pride
 - o Chair Pride expressed that we (the BHRC and Juan Pena of the KHRC) have selected the day for the Fair Housing Training. April 11th, 2019. The specific time for the event needs to be determined. This will be a basic meeting that KHRC will advertise this event and Mr. Juan Pena will conduct the training session. This is required training for housing professionals and landlords.
 - o CBS news broadcast copyright

Commissioner Hille has contacted Vanderbilt University and they have directed him to contact CBS for copyright permission for the research video which was presented in the BHRC video on September 7, 2018 at the Levitt AMP Friday Night Event. He also indicated the name (Mr. Sam Coleman) of a member of the state human rights commission as we consider a future partnership and meeting in Berea. Commissioner Hille will proceed with contacting CBS.

Public Comment

Mr. Ed Fredriksson, our guest, recommended two additional resource persons who might be able to support our community forum on employment for disabled persons. The persons are Ms. Sharon Dinsmore, the state American Disabilities Administration Office (ADA) and Ms. Dona Shelton, the State ADA Coordinator; contact phone: 502-564-1835

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

Prepared By:

[Eric Hogsten, AA]
Administrative Assistant

Minutes Recorded: October 01, 2018
Minutes Approved: with corrections, January 7, 2019

[Mim Pride, Chair]
Berea Human Rights Commission
October 01, 2018

**INVITATION TO ATTEND
A COMMUNITY FORUM
-ON-
EMPLOYMENT FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month.
This year's theme is "America's Workforce: Empowering All."

In support of this event, the Berea Human Rights Commission
is sponsoring a community forum on employment
of people with disabilities on

Tuesday, October 30, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
in the basement of Berea City Hall.

All businesses are invited to attend the forum and learn from
Katie Whaley, of the UK Human Development Institute,
about tax and other incentives for employers who hire
people with disabilities.

People with disabilities represent an under utilized group of diverse
and talented individuals who would be a tremendous asset to
Berea businesses.

We hope you can come and participate in this forum and learn about
how the unique gifts and talents of people with disabilities can
benefit and enrich your business!

Comments to the Berea City Council, October 2, 2018

On behalf of the Berea Human Rights Commission, as delivered by Peter Hille, BHRC

The Berea City ordinance (22.700-22.708) that establishes the Human Rights Commission states that "it is the public policy of the City of Berea to promote fair treatment for all people" and that the Human Rights Commission "shall encourage fair treatment and equal opportunity for all people...and shall promote mutual understanding and respect among all economic, social, racial, religious, sex, age and ethnic groups..."

In light of this charge, which the ordinance confers upon the Commission, the members of the Berea Human Rights Commission are obligated to make known our concern about the posts on social media last week, as reported in the Richmond Register and on Channel 18. These posts demonstrated a deep lack of respect for women, the very kind of respect for others that the Commission is charged to promote.

We take no pleasure in our task here tonight. In fact, we wish that it was not necessary, but it is. We wish there was no need for a Human Rights Commission, but we have seen time and again that there is. So we are here to deliver this message—that it is not acceptable for anyone to disrespect the rights and dignity of women—or anyone's rights and dignity. And, the bar must be set even higher for our elected officials.

I'm actually sorry that the full weight of this is falling upon just a few people. It is a much larger problem that affects our entire society. Men like me—and most of you—grew up in a different time. We were raised to think some things were OK back then. But the truth is they were never OK. The truth is that women have been treated horribly throughout history, and men got away with it because they were more powerful. Women have been kept from voting, from working, kept from receiving equal pay. Ridiculed. Disrespected. Shamed. And over and over, assaulted and told to keep quiet about it. Things are changing, and honestly it's about time. And, as we are seeing, women don't want to be told to keep quiet anymore.

It's time for us, as men, to man up about what's been going on. Because the arc of the moral universe is long, and it does bend toward justice. It's time for men to understand that we need to change, we need to think differently, and we need to act differently. And we need to be better role models for the young people who look up to us.

But it's going to be hard to change all the ways that our society doesn't measure up to its better angels. That's why we have a Human Rights Commission. And that's why we're here tonight, to make it clear that respect and mutual understanding are, by law, the public policy of the City of Berea, and that those who are entrusted with our governance must govern themselves by that high standard.