Berea Human Rights Commission

Regular Meeting

September10, 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, Gene Stinchcomb, and Rev. Carla Gilbert (Acting Vice-Chair).

Eric Hogsten (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: Ms. Jackie Bowling and City Councilman Ronnie Terrill

Summary of Actions Taken:

* Meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by the Chair.
* The agenda was presented and approved as distributed.
* Announcements.
  + Received in the mail information from Juan Pena regarding the 2018 KY Hispanic and Refugee Information and conference that will occur in October.
  + NAMI, conference regarding veteran’s empowerment will occur this month.
  + The BHRC will participate (the chair and administrative assistant) in the Berea Business Fest, this week from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
* Minutes from the August Meeting and Special Meeting Minutes
  + Minutes from the August Regular Meeting and the Special Meeting required some corrections and clarifications in the notes that were taken during the meeting. Their review and approval was tabled. These minutes will be revised and re-submitted for review and approval in the future meeting of the commission.
* Treasurer’s Report for August and finalized end year report.
  + Hogsten will reformat the expenditures so it will show the budget. The Expenditures report needs to have the date correct. Gene Motioned, Eef seconded.

**New Business**

* Debriefing of the BHRC’s presentation at the Levitt AMP Friday Night Presentation. Commissioners agreed that one of our strategic planning goals was met by sharing with members of the community some of the research information the covered the 50th year recognition of the racial incident in Berea which was covered by national news broadcast. It was noted that evening that the audience was asked not to copy this presentation. The group agreed that a great deal of work with this research was conducted by Dr. Alicestyne Turley, Director of the Carter G. Woodson Center at Berea College, along with assistance from her summer students. We have asked Dr. Turley to provide us with an invoice for the budgeted amount to address some of her expenses. The commission budgeted approximately $300 to support duplication and other costs related to this research. It was shared that Dr. Turley has discussed future scholarship of this research and will consider writing an article and/or a book about her work in this area. Appreciation was also expressed to Commissioner Peter Hille for all his work to conduct and present this 10 minute video information to the community. During his introduction of the presentation topic on Friday evening, Commissioner Peter Hille explained that appropriate copyright compliance had been obtained for our use of segments from the television news broadcast. It was also mentioned that Peter gave a request that the video not be copied during the presentation. Commissioner Janice Blythe was thanked for other comments that she made at the presentation regarding additional printed information that was available in the BHRC booth that evening, for recognizing members of the BHRC, and especially for making the special recognition of Loyal Jones who was able to attend the Friday night event. In 1968, Mr. Jones was one of the Berea citizens who were involved in community conversations about the incident; he and other local citizens (later awarded the first John G. Fee Award) also led some of the legal assistance needed to support those allegedly involved in the incident; it was nice having Loyal Jones present in the audience on Friday evening. Other discussion about this 50th year recognition was offered by the group. This event was well aligned with our first two goals in our strategic plan. Questions and comments ensued among the commissioners regarding next steps and our educational approach for the future.

The conversation continued and our guests, Ms. Bowling and Councilman Terrill gave comments regarding their thoughts of the Friday night event (Levitt AMP Presentation), particularly pertaining to the showing of the video. Both guests expressed that the video was organized and presented well to the audience. Ms. Bowling felt that the video would have been better presented at the library. Commissioner Gene Stinchcomb indicated that the BHRC would take her comment under consideration for the future. Ms. Bowling also expressed that she was unable to make any association with the Hispanic Festival theme of the evening with the presentation by the BHRC. Commissioner Blythe indicated that in respect of limited time in that program she did not mention such a connection in her verbal comments to the audience that evening. However, Blythe indicated in this regular September meeting that the BHRC had done collaborative work with the Latin American Students Association (LASA) of Berea College and their sponsor Dr. Fred deRosset. Blythe further commented that those some of our previous co-sponsorships with LASA (approximately three separate events advertised for the greater Berea community) had occurred on the Berea College campus and these accomplishments were cited on the handout which was available that Friday evening at our booth.

Both guests raised the question regarding the value of showing the presentation about the 1968 racial incident. Mr. Terrill remembered the incident; he commented that those who were leaders of the incident were not from Berea. He raised concerns that such a showing would bring outsiders into Berea. Commissioner Rev. Carla Gilbert expressed that it was important for us to know that it was a sad day for the Berea community and that it involved tragic occurrences for some Berea families. Moreover, it was inspiring to know that the Berea community came together, both black and white community members, to address the situation. Other commissioners commented (Blythe, Stinchcomb, and Hille) that the reality of the situation was recognized, that the Friday night video presentation was NOT a celebration, because the 1968 incident was in fact a very tragic event. According to history in our community, however, this incident later led to the formulation of a Human Rights Commission that lasted for some time following this 1968 incident. Today (as well as our decision to recognize the 50th year review of the event), the BHRC acknowledges a recognition of a reality of an incident that occurred in 1968. Further, it was noted that racial conflict did not automatically go away at that time, but it was also Not “swept under a rug.” It is the goal of the BHRC to provide a better understanding about our community, our challenges with human rights that our community has faced in history, and to acknowledge for educational purposes that there are real people in our community who in the past have chosen to do what was right and to foster honesty and transparency by addressing conflicting and challenging issues that are related to human rights in today’s society. This is one of the reasons that the BHRC has initiated the John G. Fee Award each year. The commission agreed with our guests that none of us wishes to promote fear, anger or violence. While we (commissioners and guests) may not agree completely about the value of such a presentation at the Friday Night Levitt Event, it has been acknowledged by comments that many of the commissioners received that evening and in subsequent moments, that some members of our community felt educated about this history and appreciated an opportunity to learn about and gain a better understanding about the 1968 incident. At this point, BHRC Chair Mim Pride commented that it is a fact that there have been and currently are challenging issues in this community and it is obvious that there still needs to be serious conversations about this and other issues within our community. In transitioning to a close, Chair Pride encouraged us to have more conversations like this evening to educate ourselves about effective ways to address these community issues in the future.

* Conversation with Hispanic Outreach
  + It was agreed that in a future meeting we will discuss pertinent events and explore the commission’s emphasis on educational leadership about Hispanic outreach in the Berea community. We will continue to explore ways to support an existing organization such as LASA and related local Hispanic outreach education.

Old Business

* Office Report: Ms. Bowling asked a question regarding the BHRC’s amount of payment to have a booth present at each of the the Levitt AMP Friday Events. Commissioner Peter Hille clarified the commission’s level of participation and indicated the accurate cost of our participation and indicated that this cost as presented in the line item of our budget represents our participation only for the first night of each month of the Levitt AMP series. He further indicated that our administrative assistant and our chair discuss any necessary adjustments in our costs for a season’s pass. Hille further commented that this participation provides opportunities for those who attend the evening festival to obtain copies of our educational materials and ask member representatives at the booth of the commission specific questions about our work regarding human rights in this community.
* Follow up with Dr. Turley’s research.
  + Subcommittee members Commissioners Peter Hille, Mim Pride, and Janice Blythe will schedule another appointmentwith Dr. Turley for the continued discussions about her work and any potential collaboration we might have with the Carter G. Woodson Center in the future.
* Preliminary plans regarding the Quarterly Report to City Council are being conducted by Chair Mim Pride. There was a brief discussion about potential revisions in some of our handouts to represent our work more accurately to the City Council and the community.
* “Get on the Bus” Project—Chair Pride will obtain the contractual fee to present to Dr. Jackie Burnside and Ms. Sharyn Mitchell to complete their work on this project. Chair Pride will finalize arrangements for the formal presentation of the project by Dr. Burnside and Ms. Mitchell to the BHRC.
* Since October is the month that recognizes employment for those with disabilities, there was a brief discussion of the educational workshop being planned to promote greater community knowledge about employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Two tentative dates have been chosen, October 29 or October 30. Administrative assistant Eric Hogsten will verify the availability of the Community Conference Room in the basement of City Hall on either of these dates. Commissioners Randy Dinsmore and Janice Blythe will continue to work on details to select a specific date, time, location, and finalize the program for the workshop.
* Progress report about Housing Training by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights
  + Chair Pride has contacted Juan Pena at the KCHR about this training session. Because this is an opportunity to both educate our community and satisfy a requirement for real estate and landlords, this training will be continued. In previous sessions, this training session has been well attended by landlords, real estate leaders, BHRC members, and other citizens within the community. When final arrangements are worked out with Mr. Pena, an invitation will be extended to our City Council members and the Mayor.
  + Public Comments:

Mr. Terrill encouraged all persons present to remember to vote in November. No other comments were made.

7:51 P.M. MOTION MOVED and CARRIED to ADJOURN.

Prepared By:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[Eric Hogsten, AA]

Administrative Assistant

Minutes Recorded: September 10, 2018

Minutes Approved: January 7, 2019

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[Mim Pride, Chair]

Berea Human Rights Commission