

Berea Human Rights Commission Monthly Meeting
June 1, 2015

At 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room, Vice President David Shroyer convened the monthly meeting of the Berea Human Rights Commission (BHRC).

Attendance: David Shroyer (convener and chair of the meeting); Ali Blair and Eef Fontanez (newly appointed members to the BHRC); and Janice Blythe (recorder). No guests attended.

New and continuing members of the BHRC were welcomed by the Chair and introductions were made by the group.

Minutes from the May meeting were unavailable.

Old Business

- **Orientation session for new commission members**—Mr. Shroyer discussed the previous practice and asked our preference for how we should proceed. Discussion ensued and it was decided that David will inquire with the Kentucky Human Rights Commission to determine if Mr. Juan Pena or his designee can conduct the training either in July or August. When a date has been agreed upon David will inform our group.
- **Fair Housing Training held in Berea on April 29** yielded excellent attendance. Numbers provided by Mr. Pena of the KY HRC reveal more than 100 persons attended the training session. His office also provided a listing of names and addresses of the participants.
- **Age-Friendly Berea Update**—David provided an overview of the history of this initiative. He commented that its origin began with the Berea City Council and its endorsement to follow guidelines established by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the AARP. A plan is being developed to enhance Berea's town-friendliness to elders and to explore broader benefits of age-friendly initiatives for the community-at-large. WHO and AARP criteria include several parameters to assess age-friendliness, including healthcare, social and cultural resources, transportation, employment, and other quality of life resources. David is attending meetings and he discussed briefly the community survey that is currently being administered. He distributed copies of the survey to commission members and emphasized an August deadline for the receipt of the survey. The survey can be found online at the City of Berea web site. Faculty at ECU will analyze survey data and at some point findings will be announced to the community.
- **David shared information about other work in the community which also relates to the Age-Friendly Initiative**
 - Holistic Health emphasis—to develop more health resources pertinent to aging persons which will enable them to remain in their homes. Carla Bowman is leading this work.
 - A new senior living facility continues to be explored. Rev. Bob Shaffer is leading this effort.
- Janice Blythe commented that "the 2016 Perspective Conversation on Race Conference", planned by Dr. Alicestyne Turley at the Carter G Woodson Center at Berea College, is in progress. Janice suggested that Dr. Turley be invited to a future meeting of the BHRC so that she can provide more specific details and solicit how the BHRC can continue to partner with the Center.
- **Web-page update**—BHRC Chairperson, Rev. Carla Gilbert, is working with former BHRC Chair and member, to initiate the update. Minutes are being uploaded to the site, along with other updates about commission members and other pertinent information.
- **Office location for the BHRC**—David presented the key to our new office space for the commission. We will be located in the Chamber of Commerce Building at 204 N. Broadway.

David further indicated that we now need to move forward to acquire office furnishings, equipment, and so forth. Mr. Fontanez volunteered to explore options to support this need (surplus sales and other sources of repurposed office supplies and equipment). Ms. Blair also volunteered to do work on Face Book to support future needs of our office. Mr. Shroyer and Mr. Stinchcomb (from previous conversations) have agreed to work in the office a few hours weekly. Additional Mr. Juan Pena, of the Kentucky Human Rights Commission, has agreed to spend some time each month in the office to support our local needs. All these combined group efforts will yield an operational/working office real soon. We are pleased with this progress.

- **Part-time Clerical Position**—David verified that we now have official approval for a 10 – 20 hour per week clerical position. Commission members Rev. Carla Gilbert, Mr. Gene Stinchcomb, and other commission members worked out final details about the position and it has now been reviewed and modified by City Manager, Mr. Randy Stone, and the Berea City Council. Mr. Shroyer also informed those in attendance this evening that we now have four (4) applications for this position to consider. Since the position has not been officially advertised at this point, Mr. Shroyer indicated that we would need to transition this evening into Executive Session to determine next steps for hiring the clerical staff member.

Executive Session ensued. Outcomes from this discussion:

- Moved (J. Blythe) and seconded (A. Blair) to advertise the position in *the Berea Citizen* and *the Richmond Register*. Motion passed. The position announcement will also be placed on the Web sites of the City of Berea and the BHRC.
- Rev. Carla Gilbert and Mr. David Shroyer will inquire with the city manager the city's policy and practice for advertising positions.
- The BHRC Chair and Vice President will draft the position advertisement, circulate to commission members and the city manager, revise as needed and proceed to place the ads.
- In our interview process, all members of the BHRC should engage in the review of applications and the interview process. The Commission chairperson will present our recommendation to the City Manager for final processing.
- Mr. Shroyer presented four applications currently received. No names nor other discussion occurred since the position has not been officially advertised. These four applications will be included in the pool of applicants when the formal advertising deadline has been reached. All applications will then be reviewed and action will be taken using the aforementioned process.
- David reported that approximately ten days ago an informal complaint regarding alleged fair housing discrimination was reported to Chairperson Rev. Carla Gilbert. For the two new members to the BHRC, Mr. Shroyer reviewed our process to determine probable cause in response to any complaint.
- Future avenues for education within the realm of employment, fair housing, and public accommodations will need to be included in our broader educational components to our community.

We transitioned from Executive Session back to our agenda.

New Business

- Mr. Shroyer announced that July is "Americans with Disabilities Month", associated with federal legislation enacted by the American Disabilities Act. We will need to submit an article to the *Berea Citizen*.
- **Revision in publications of our monthly articles.** David informed us that Beth Meyers of the *Berea Citizen* has indicated that we now have space for publication of a quarterly article. Beth further indicates that there will continue to be flexibility if we need to publish information, articles, etc. more frequently, she will work with us to accomplish this outcome.
- **Informal complaint**—Mr. Shroyer reported that an informal complaint of alleged fair housing discrimination was presented to Chairperson Gilbert. Because mediation occurred, no formal complaint was filed.
- **New members** appointed to the BHRC were again officially welcomed and invited to offer comments about their future interests and work with the commission.
 - Ms. Blair requested that more information be made available to us regarding KRS 500. We need to engage in further conversation with Juan Pena of the KY HRC regarding "the Uniform Residential Tenant-Landlord Act." All members of the BHRC need to be better informed of this legislation. We discussed resource persons in our community who may also work directly with us.
 - **Berea Community School**—Mr. Fontanez updated the group about student organizations and activities at the school, including activities of the Gay-Straight Alliance, the Day of Silence and the Diversity Club. Mr. Shroyer shared with our new members current conversations with the Richmond HRC and their concerns within the school system. David further indicated that Chairperson Gilbert continues to explore ways in which our commission can learn more about teaching tolerance, reducing a culture of bullying, and understanding diversity. Neither the Richmond HRC nor the BHRC has been able to ascertain effective means to provide a broader educational impact in our school systems. Mr. Shroyer also noted that pursuing effective ways to address a culture of bullying is an agenda item established by State Representative Rita Smart.
- **Our next meeting will be held July 6, 2015 in the Community Room at City Hall.**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn at 7:55 p.m.

Recorder for this meeting,

Janice B. Blythe—electronic signature 6.29.15 @ 6:59 p.m.

Janice B. Blythe
BHRC Member