

Berea Human Rights Commission
Regular Meeting
September 9, 2019, 6:30 PM
CITY HALL, COMMUNITY ROOM
212 CHESTNUT ST, BEREA, KY 40403.

Present: Mim Pride (Chair), Eef Fontanez (Treasurer), Peter Hille (Secretary), Randy Dinsmore, Gene Stinchcomb (Vice Chair), and Virginia Bland

Absent: Rachel Burnside

Eric Hogsten (Administrative Assistant)

Public: Jacqueline Bowling, Paul Jacobs, LaRee Jacobs-Job Coach Goodwill Industries, Rev. Carla Gilbert

Summary of Actions Taken:

- Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM
- The agenda Approved with no changes. Motion: Hille Second: Stinchcomb
- Announcements.
 - Pride requested additional Commissioner to table with her on October 4 at Levitt AMP. Dinsmore will do that.
 - Dinsmore outlined three future programs: Forum on Social Security Benefits led by Dinsmore and Mayor Fraley Suggested date third Thursday in January 2020; Forum on Employment of People with Disabilities Suggested date April 2020; Series of conversations on peace and reconciliation. Suggested date of first meeting June 2020
 - Hille recently attended a meeting in Alabama and had the chance to walk across the Edmund Pettis Bridge with a guide who participated with Dr. King in the Selma to Montgomery March and was the victim of the police violence at the time as an eleven-year-old child. He also visited the white cemetery in Selma, at which the guide pointed out that only Confederate flags are flown. He commented that there is evidence that White Supremacy continues to be prevalent and virulent. Pride noted that the College has done an educational Civil Rights Tour which they might possibly open to the public in the future. Hille noted the Commission might partner with the College on that.
 - Pride announced that the Quakers are taking the lead in creating a series of events to show and discuss the documentary, "Until They See Us" which is about wrongly incarcerated people. These conversations are likely to be scheduled in the Spring. Mim will attend organizational meetings and advise Commissioners.
- Minutes from the August Meeting were tabled pending additional feedback from legal counsel. Motion: Hille; Second: Dinsmore. Pride reminded Commissioners that all documents related to the Blair complaint are to be considered confidential.

- Treasure's report for end of fiscal year. Final total of expenditures was \$5372.95. Final reconciliation revealed that some items had been incorrectly charged to other accounts. Those errors have been corrected and Hogsten is working with Susan Meeks to improve the system. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report: Hille; Second: Stinchcomb

New Business

- A volunteer has come forward with the offer to assist with Commission projects. The volunteer's name and address are available from Hogsten.
- Zinnia Hensley has been named Community Outreach Officer with the Berea Police Department. Pride asked for Commission approval to add her to the October Agenda
- The possibility of the Commission taking a position on the discussion of the creation of a City Chaplain. Hille presented a motion for a resolution on behalf of the Commission as follows:

Background: At the City Council meeting on August 20, 2019, the Council voted to table for further consideration the proposed Municipal Order that would establish and name a paid chaplain for the Council. The Mayor ruled to allow comment on this topic, and many of those present got up to speak. Nearly all called explicitly for a moment of silence to be adopted in lieu of either the existing practice or the proposed chaplaincy. Several noted that a moment of silence would provide space for people of all faiths or of no faith.

Rationale: The BHRC supports the proposal to replace the current practice of invocations with a moment of silence. We believe this is in keeping with the charge of the BHRC to "encourage fair treatment and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age (40 or over), familial status, or because of the person's status as a qualified individual with a disability". Ordinance 22.700 affirms that such fair treatment is the policy of the City. Neither the current practice of invocations, nor the proposed chaplaincy can satisfy, at each and every meeting, the standard of fair treatment regardless of religion.

Further, it has been suggested that the current practice be modified to restrict invocations to pastors of established churches in Berea. We believe this sets up an even more problematic set of conditions both in terms of the fair treatment consideration referenced above as well as legal issues regarding the right of the Council to define and determine what is or is not "an established church" in Berea.

Resolution: Given the above background and rationale, the Berea Human Rights Commission recommends that the Berea City Council adopt a moment of silence in place of invocations to open City Council meetings.

Motion: Hille Second: Dinsmore

Passed without objection or abstention.

Old Business

- Office Report - Hogsten

- There have been issues with the accurate and timely recording of expenses. Hogsten will be preparing our Purchase Orders and other changes have been made to address the problems. These problems are not new, but they did contribute to Councilman Davis' lack of accurate information
- One FOIA request was received since the last meeting.
- Hogsten will be out of the office October 4 and 18. He will not be available to work at the table for Levitt Amp on September 20. Budget Allocation for 2019-20 as approved by Council action is \$4,000.
- Budget:
 - Budget Allocation for 2019-20 is \$4,000 as approved by Council.
 - A draft budget was discussed. Format includes account numbers and proposed allocation of funds (attached to these minutes). Commissioners were reminded that we are authorized to raise money and do not have to seek Council approval for programs for which we raise funds. We may also approach the Mayor for additional funds for specific projects. Hille commented that the capacity of the council to control Commission activities through the budget is limited to the control of City funds. Motion to approve the budget passed. Motion: Stinchcomb; Second: Hille
 - Regarding accounting for donations. Stinchcomb will look into this and report in October.
 - Fundraising policy as read into the August minutes was approved: The BHRC is authorized by the establishing ordinance to raise funds from other sources outside of Berea City Government. The BHRC notes that any funds raised from outside should meet the following criteria: A) Funds raised should be used to advance the goals and objectives of the BHRC; B) No funds should be accepted from groups or individuals that do not support the purpose and share the goals of the BHRC; C) If any funds are accepted that are restricted to specific uses those uses should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the BHRC. Motion: Hille; Second: Dinsmore; Passed.
- Adoption of the City Municipal Ordinance for conducting meetings was tabled pending editing (by Stinchcomb) to make the document relevant to the Human Rights Commission and resolve internal inconsistencies. It was agreed that we would work within these guidelines pending formal approval of revised guidelines. Motion to table approval: Stinchcomb; Second: Hille
- Celebration of October as Disability Employment Month. Bland is working on a Job Fair, but it will not likely be held in October. Dinsmore has announced (see above) two

additional forums to be held during 2020. In addition, he will prepare a letter or article for the newspaper in October.

- John G. Fee Award. Approved in August. October 1, 2019 chosen as the date to present the Award at the council meeting.
- Hosting statewide Human Rights Commission on hold due to budget cuts.
- Update on trainings for Berea College students plans pending availability of the SGA President.
- Public Comment
 - LaRee Jacobs announced an Expungement Clinic at the Methodist Church in Richmond on October 1, 2019.
- Additional comments from Commissioners:
 - We need to remember to return to the discussion of the Janice Blythe Award and to the discussion of a memento for Fee recipients.
 - It was suggested that the Fee Award recipients be recognized at the Levitt Amp Concert on October 4.

7:15 P.M. MOTION MOVED and CARRIED to ADJOURN.

Prepared By:




[Eric Hogsten, AA]

Administrative Assistant

Minutes Recorded: September 09, 2019

Minutes Approved:



[Mim Pride, Chair]

Berea Human Rights Commission

October 07, 2019