Berea Human Rights Commission

Regular Meeting

December 2, 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), Rachel Burnside, and Virginia Bland

Eric Hogsten (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: N/A

Public: Jacque Bowling and Dr. Jackie Burnside

Summary of Actions Taken:

* Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM
* Chair declared that a quorum was present
* Introductions of public attendees
* The agenda was approved as circulated. Moved: Hille  
  Seconded Dinsmore Passed unanimously.
* Announcements.
  + The Commission received an invitation to a holiday event. Members advised of date, time and location.
  + Rachel Burnside’s term has expired. Without objection she is present tonight to present information, but will not vote on any items.
  + Resolution to express appreciation for Burnside’s service and to encourage the reappointment of Burnside. Motion: Hille; Second: Stinchcomb Passed unanimously.
  + KHRC has lost budget and staff. Most recently the Chair resigned. Juan Pena, our representative has continued to be very responsive, but is unable at this time to provide services as he has in the past.
* Minutes from the November Meeting
  + Approval of minutes from the November meeting, Motion: Hille; Second: Dinsmore. Discussion: Motion amended to correct a typo on p.2, second bullet to “Treasurer” instead of “Treasure.” Approved as amended, unanimously.
* Treasurer’s report for November 2019
  + Motion to accept report as presented: Stinchcomb; Second: Fontanez. Discussion: Comments on format for future reports. After discussion of format (to include monthly expenses, budget, YTD balance and payables) Motion passed unanimously.

**New Business**

* Report on Zinnia Hensley’s Meet and Greet:

1. Hogsten urged Commission to participate in a free trial of Charity Tracker software. The software allows charitable entities to share information about clients to insure that the best possible service is provided. Trial is free until June 2020. After that there is a monthly fee. The Berea PD and Food Bank are currently using the service. Charity Tracker is HIPPA certified. We would never enter confidential case information. Commissioners agreed to ask a representative to speak to the January meeting.
2. Burnside noted the emphasis on mental health and substance abuse among organizations at the Meet and Greet. She recommended that we connect with these groups and ask them to present to the Commission. Hogsten has contact information and will follow up.

* Timeline for review of Fee Award Criteria and Process: After discussion it was agreed that:

1. Hogsten will circulate existing documents to all members. Documents to be discussed at the January meeting.

2. At January meeting Pride to appoint a committee to follow up (Bland, Burnside possible members)

3. Committee to develop plan for future and present to the Commission no later than the February meeting.

4. Bland recommended that the announcement be presented to the schools (principals) in April or May. Commissioners agreed.

5. Bland suggested that the Youth Award be re-named, the Dr. Janice Blythe Award in recognition of her commitment to youth. Commissioners agreed.

Subcommittee to present a plan including all of the above of these elements no later than the February 2020 meeting.

**Old Business**

* Fee Award Plaques have been delayed. Accordingly we will pause finalizing of these until changes to the award naming are fully completed as discussed above.
* Hogsten has received two calls:

1. One was a complaint about a rental situation which was outside our jurisdiction. Complainant was referred to appropriate resources.
2. Second caller expressed concern about the defeat of the “ Moment of silence” and inquired about nest steps. Caller also indicated a hope that the Commission would take up the issues of the elderly. The caller was Jeff Rubin. He will be invited to meet with the Commission to discuss both issues. Hogsten to follow up.

* Stinchcomb reported there is no update on the Conduct of Meetings Document, to be carried over to January.
* Status of Confidentiality/Open Meetings Training. Pride reported that she had contacted Pena and he is still seeking an attorney to provide training. Restrictions in budget and staff have made it difficult to find someone. Pena provided a document from the AG entitled, Protecting Your Right to Know. That document is part of a document provided by the City of Berea titled Your Duty Under Law which is signed by the Mayor, City Administrator, Council members and members of some City committees. Stinchcomb provided correspondence dated 1/25/16 which included a response to Open Meetings/ Confidentiality questions at that time. Stinchcomb circulated that correspondence to all members. Plan: press for training, read and be prepared to discuss and sign Your Duty Under Law, read and be prepared to discuss attorney opinion from 2016. Pride reminded the group of the distinction (which may have been lost in the discussion at the November meeting) between what comes to the Commission in public meetings versus complaints filed at the office, with Hogsten or with individual members of the Commission. Those are kept confidential and processed immediately. The uncertainty is around whether the Commission can move to executive session to hear complaints when meeting in regular session. Hille observed that our deliberations could help us to develop policies to guide us and anyone who might come to us in a public meeting with a complaint seeking confidentiality. Stinchcomb observed that there are multiple sources on questions such as this (statutes, case law, Opinions of the Attorney General) and these are not always consistent with one another. Hille noted that if there are conflicting legal sources and resulting gray areas we can try to draw our lines short of those gray areas.
* Meeting with HRC colleagues in Berea Summer 2020- Hille reported that work on this project halted during the budget discussions. Commissioners are willing to move forward and Hille is willing to provide leadership. Pride and Hille will discuss dates with Pena.
* Item of related interest: Stinchcomb noted that the City of Belleville has passed a Fairness Ordinance making 15 such ordinances in the state. Commissioners would be interested in having a conversation with others about Fairness at the HRC gathering. Hogsten asked to collect Ordinances from the 15 cities.
* Options for Fundraising. Stinchcomb met with Meeks. She and Gregory are of the opinion that any grants received would have to go through the budget and Council approval would be required. They suggested creating a 501(c)3. Hille reminded the Commission that the first step to a 501(c)3 is the creation of a not-for-profit corporation. That corporation could then apply for the tax status, but it would not necessarily be granted. The only real need for a 501(c)3 is to receive grants or convey tax deduction for contributions. There are other options for raising money including soliciting direct support for events or working with an existing 501(c)3 as fiscal sponsor. Commission members agreed to table activity on this matter until there is a need for funding.
* Report on “When They See Us”. Berea Friends Meeting, Berea College Woodson Center, Madison County Library-Berea and BHRC are sponsoring the showing of this documentary on January 9, February 13, March 5 and April 2 at 6:30 at the Madison County Library. Each segment is 2 hours. Discussion leaders will be available to lead discussions after each session. A discussion guide is available. The coordinating team would welcome a donation to cover the cost of refreshments. Pride will check with City Administrator to ensure this is allowed. Motion: Stinchcomb; Second: Hille to approve up to $50.00 with the possibility for more. Motion passed unanimously.
* Hille reported that Shannon Roberts Smith requested the use of the our video presentation on the 1968 shootings for use at the First Thursday Group (Friends Meeting) on December 5 at 6:00PM. Commissioners are welcome to attend the First Thursday Group. Hille burned a disc for loan to them and explained the conditions of use. Burnside asked for a copy of the letter of agreement with CBS. Hogsten will provide. Hille suggested the Commission prepare a document to describe the appropriate uses of the film and to encourage that use. Primary restriction is that it can’t be put online. Bland suggested presenting the film at a forum like the disability forum at which racism could be discussed, including history, current status and what we need to do moving forward. Stinchcomb raised the possibility of doing something with the Richmond HRC also. Pride suggested possibly connecting with NAACP as well.
* Public Comment Dr. Burnside commended the Commission for its work. In her research in the Berea Archives she came across the original (1968) Commission, she noted their bravery in doing their work at that time. The climate has changed; in its latest incarnation the racism is more subtle but it is definitely here. She is pleased with the educational emphasis the Commission has chosen because K-16+ schools coverage of racism is still incomplete.

7:39 PM Motion to adjourn: Hille; Seconded: Stinchcomb. Prior to adjournment Pride wished Happy Holidays to all and noted the next meeting date of January 6. Dinsmore noted he and Mayor Fraley will be conducting a disability forum in January, Burnside offered to help with a flyer if needed. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Prepared By:

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[Eric Hogsten, AA]

Administrative Assistant

Minutes Recorded: December 02, 2019

Minutes Approved:

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[Mim Pride, Chair]

Berea Human Rights Commission

January 06, 2019