**Minutes**

**Berea Human Rights Commission**

**Special Called Meeting / Business Session**

**Monday, August 3, 2020**

**6:30 PM**

Special Called Meeting of the Berea Human Rights Commission

Meeting will be held by video teleconferencing per KRS 61.826

The public may see and hear the meetings by the City of Berea Facebook Page,

@bereakygov or https://www.facebook.com/bereakygov/

Commissioners Present: Randy Dinsmore, Peter Hille, Janel Davenport, Peanut Johnson, Sharyn Mitchell, Gene Stinchcomb, Virginia Bland

Guest: Berea Administrator David Gregory

Meeting called to order with roll call at 6:30

Greetings and welcome of new Commissioner Sharyn Mitchell

Agenda approval: motion by Johnson, seconded by Dinsmore, passed

Chair notes special called meeting, only items on agenda may be discussed

Announcements: New appointment of Commissioner Mitchell

Approval of March minutes: motion by Johnson; second by Bland, passed

Treasurer’s report: Chair explains report is from City based on expenditures through February, no further expenditures logged, fiscal year is closed.

Motion to approve by Hille, second by Dinsmore, passed

**New Business**

Discussion of position of BHRC Chair

Stinchcomb indicates willingness to serve as Chair

Johnson moves to elect Stinchcomb Chair, Dinsmore second, passed

Discussion: Hille requests clarification that Stinchcomb is being nomited for position of Chair, not to continue as acting Chair. Johnson affirms that is the sense of his motion, accepts clarification as friendly amendment, Dinsmore second. Passed.

Hille notes this creates vacancy in Vice Chair position formerly filled by Stinchcomb, addressing vacancy to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Discussion of staff support arrangements—Zinnia Hensley providing staffing for BHRC due to no longer having Eric Hogsden on staff. Mitchell inquired regarding Hogsden’s responsibilities, Stinchcomb outlined those tasks. Mitchell asked if we needed to fill that position. Stinchcomb noted it was not being filled due to budget considerations. David Gregory affirmed position not funded due in City budget.

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget: BHRC allocated $500 for this FY in final City budget passed by Council in June. Due to the small amount, Chair Stinchcomb recommends we not put together a line item budget. Motion to not develop a line item budget due to the small amount allocated by the City: Hille motion, Johnson second, passed.

**Discussion of FY 2020-21 programs and activities**

John G. Fee award: Motion to proceed with award despite COVID, noting need to adjust timeline. Bland, motion, second Johnson, passed. Bland will chair project, Johnson will assist, Administrator Gregory offers assistance of the City as needed. Bland will bring timeline to next meeting, Stinchcomb will add it to the agenda. Hille suggests it would be good if we could present the award at a time when people could be together again.

Statewide convening of HRC’s: Stinchcomb notes likely need to postpone due to budget and COVID restrictons on gatherings. Hille notes potential for virtual convening, should keep that option open going forward. Stinchcomb suggests Hille continue to explore this.

Discussion of statement of solidarity of non-discrimination and antiauthoritarian abuse: Stinchcome had requested a volunteer draft a statement. Hille had drafted a statement and circulated to the Commission prior to the July meeting which was cancelled due to lack of quorum. Hille updated and re-sent the draft statement to the Commissioners ahead of this meeting. Hille read the updated statement as sent via email to the Commissioners.

Hille explained that the statement he sent and read was drafted with the language “we the undersigned members of the Commission” since it was originally drafted at a time when the Commission was not holding meetings. Noting that the full Commission is now acting on this in a meeting, he proposed amending the draft to strike “undersigned” as we are acting on this as the full HRC. Hille moved approval of the statement as updated and amended, Dinsmore second:

*Whereas there is a long and deeply troubling history of violence against people of color in the United States; and,*

*Whereas this violence has in many instances been perpetrated by law enforcement officers; and,*

*Whereas those who have carried out these acts of violence have too often not been held accountable; and,*

*Whereas the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, along with many others, have precipitated a national moment of reckoning;*

*Therefore, we, the members of the Berea Human Rights Commission do hereby declare our support for and solidarity with the peaceful protesters in Berea, all over Kentucky and across the United States who have lifted up their voices to make this simple and irrefutable declaration: Black Lives Matter;*

*Further, we add our voices in support of the Berea City Council Resolution No. 10-2020, in recognizing that “the Berea Police Department has made and continues to make important changes in policy and policing including the prohibition of chokeholds, addition of diversity training, and the hiring of a social services coordinator among other improvements”;*

*Finally, we add our voices in support of the proposed Juneteenth Resolution, No. 09-2020, as presented to the City Council, and resolving as follows: “that our community will strive to embody the practice of equity and equality, our council chambers providing a space to build understanding and create pathways to freedom and justice, making Berea a safe place for families regardless of race to grow, learn and succeed.”*

Roll call vote:

Johnson, nay

Dinsmore, yes

Hille, yes

Davenport, yes

Bland, abstain

Mitchell, yes

Stinchcomb, yes

Motion passed.

**Old Business**

Office Report: 2 complaints came in, did not meet the criteria for the HRC to act upon:

- Complaint from young man who read a Facebook post he felt it was discriminatory, does not fall within HRC purview, as it does not involve housing, public accommodation or employment.

- Complaint regarding slashing of Black Lives Matter banner in front of Union Church, also outside of HRC purview. The complainant was told to contact BPD as a vandalism complaint and they had done so.

Yearly Report to City Council: Stinchcomb to develop report, Hille to send prior meeting minutes to Stinchcomb for this purpose

Status of conduct of meetings: BHRC will follow the spirit of the City procedures with adjustments as needed, Stinchcomb to bring to next meeting for discussion and approval. Mitchell requests access to establishing ordinance and bylaws. Hille notes these are on the HRC website, a sub-page of the City’s website. Stinchcomb inquires of Gregory regarding who ensures Commissioners receive and sign documents relating to open meetings and open records. Gregory will have City Clerk address this.

2020 John G. Fee Awards: addressed earlier in the meeting under programs and activities.

Discussion of outside funding alternatives: Table this until we have clarity about action plans to raise funds for. Motion Hille, second Dinsmore, passed.

Johnson requests change of meeting night for discussion at next meeting.

Motion to adjourn, Hille, Second, Dinsmore

Meeting adjourned at 7:15