



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
October 19, 2023
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:30 pm**

Click [HERE](#) to access rebroadcasts of past Human Rights Commission meetings on YouTube.

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1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Jessica Harris, called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Jessica Harris
 - ii. Ernest Chambers
 - iii. Jeanette Abi-Nader
 - iv. Wolfgang Keppley
 - v. Kathryn Laughon
 - vi. Suzanne Lynn
 - vii. Andrew Orban
- c. MISSION (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. Commission is currently not receiving virtual public comment.
- b. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None
- c. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None

3. MINUTES

- a. Review of regular meeting minutes from 09/21/23
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 6
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 1
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes
- b. Review of work session minutes from 10/05/23
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 5
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 2
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. CHAIR UPDATE

- i. Calls for a minute of silence for events in Israel and Palestine
 - ii. The Office of Human Rights/Human Rights Commission is celebrating its 10th anniversary in November
 - 1. Asks for a two-person committee as a working group to plan the celebration with HRC Director and Outreach Specialist
 - 2. Will occur Thursday, 11/30/23, not during an HRC meeting
 - 3. Jessica and Ernest volunteer to participate on committee
 - a. Will meet with OHR staff during a meeting time already set for other business
 - 4. Will be a public event
- b. OHR STAFF REPORT
 - i. HRC Director
 - 1. Welcomes Lily Gates to the OHR Community Outreach and Administrative Specialist position after having served over two years as an intern
 - 2. Monthly Report was also sent to Council for Q3
 - a. Included a reminder that the HRC is receptive to feedback, requests for recommendations, etc. from Council
 - ii. OHR Community Outreach and Administrative Specialist
 - 1. Outreach report (attached in agenda packet) is up to date, and there are also some events that the Outreach Specialist is planning to attend
 - a. Let her know if interested in joining tabling
 - i. Jessica is interested in 11/16/23 Madison Ave. Tabling
 - ii. Wolfgang is interested in 10/24/23 PHAR Youth Festival
 - b. Commissioner requests that days of the week be added to the future charts
 - c. Commissioner requests that HRC be sent reminders a couple days in advance of events via Outlook Calendar
 - iii. Commissioner asks about reasoning for an uptick in ingoing and outgoing contacts in May
 - 1. Director says he cannot remember exactly, but often when there is an uptick, it is due to one or two people receiving navigational services with a more pressing need
 - 2. The entire database has each individual contact with names, so he can retrieve more specific data if needed
 - a. Detailed data is helpful for measuring relationships with community organizations and identifying gaps in Charlottesville's navigational service provision
 - iv. Commissioner asks about status of advocating with City Council for additional positions at the OHR
 - 1. Currently, the OHR has four full-time positions: Director, Intake and Administrative Specialist, Community Outreach and Administrative Specialist, and Investigator
 - 2. OHR was in the process of hiring for the Investigator, but this position requires at least two years of investigative experience

3. OHR wanted to open the possibility of training up an individual for the position, so applications for an Investigator-in-Training position just closed—interviews will occur next
 - a. OHR can get Investigator training with Resolute Mediation & Arbitration
 - b. Idea is that, ideally, all positions receive Investigator training so that there is additional capacity for receiving complaints of discrimination
- v. Commissioner asks if there is a need for additional advocacy the HRC could do for more funds for the OHR
 1. Current number of staff is much better for receiving the number of cases than the previous situation, and efficiency will further increase once an Investigator is hired
 2. Will have to see what caseloads look like after the OHR enters into a FHAP agreement
 3. Director says the 2023 data on navigational service provision reveal gaps in the system, which could give Commissioners something to work with for 2024 strategic planning

5. WORK SESSION

- a. Zoning advocacy letter
 - i. Commissioners use Martha's Rules to go over the proposal of the zoning advocacy letter attached in the agenda packet
 - ii. Questions
 1. Commissioner asks what "accessibility" refers to in the second sentence
 - a. Another Commissioner interprets it as a general ADA accessibility to housing for all, with the wording coming from Emily Dreyfus and CLIHC's language
 - b. Another Commissioner adds that things like density bonuses have ADA requirements, though it still may be helpful to clarify in the letter
 2. Commissioner suggests changing "specific zoning codes" to just "zoning codes" in the second-to-last sentence for clarity
 - iii. Amendment proposals
 1. Add letterhead and adding the "as per section 2-433..." saying the Commission is fulfilling its role to City Council
 2. Change "more accessibility" to "more ADA accessibility" in the second sentence
 3. Change "specific zoning codes" to "zoning codes" in the second-to-last sentence
 4. Attach the housing coalition letter referenced in this zoning advocacy letter in its final draft
 5. Change "coalition letter" to "attached coalition letter" in the third sentence and delete "which is attached" from the end of the second paragraph
 - iv. No Commissioners express dissent to letter as written with proposed amendments
 - v. Vote on proposal with amendments
 1. In favor: 7

- 2. Can live with: 0
- 3. Opposed: 0
- vi. Vote to send the letter to Council passes
- vii. Kathryn will make the amendments then send to Jessica to add letterhead and sign
- b. Confirmation of next work session on 11/02/23
 - i. Director would be out of office
 - ii. Commissioners decide to not hold the 11/02/23 work session
- c. New business
 - i. None

6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. Commission is currently not receiving virtual public comment.
- b. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None
- c. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None

7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a. Wolfgang
 - i. Housing First & Homeless in Charlottesville is an event hosted by the Haven and promoted by the DSA on Monday, 11/13/23 from 7-8:30pm in person
 - 1. Can send out RSVP details
 - ii. There will be an open house at Market St Park for residents there from 12-2pm on Saturday, 10/21/23

8. NEXT STEPS

- a. Kathryn
 - i. Make proposed amendments on zoning advocacy letter
- b. Jessica
 - i. Add letterhead, sign zoning advocacy letter, and send to City Council
- c. Jessica and Ernest
 - i. Meet to discuss details of HRC 10-year anniversary celebration
- d. Wolfgang
 - i. Send out RSVP details for Housing First & Homelessness Event
- e. No work session on 11/02/23

9. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm