



**Bloomington/Monroe County
Human Rights Commission**

**Minutes of August 21, 2023 Meeting
5:00 p.m.
Hooker Conference Room, City Hall**

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission met at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2023, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

Commissioners Attending: Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams, Byron Bangert, Stephen Coover, Susan Gray, Tonda Radewan, Amy Jackson. A quorum was present.

Staff Attending: BRHC Director Michael Shermis, Assistant City Attorney Audrey Brittingham, and Legal Administrative Assistant Ashley Sparks
Public Attending: Najla Routsong and Patty Moon

Call to order: Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Preliminary Matters: Introductions were made by all Commissioners and Staff.

Approval of Minutes of May 15, 2023 Meeting: Gray moved to approve minutes of July 17, 2023, pending the modification of the name of the Commission. Coover seconded. Passed unanimously, 7-0.

Report from Staff:

- i. Shermis spoke about the United Against Hate forum and presented a draft agenda for Commissioners to review. Shermis will distribute full agenda once approved. Shermis stated that the organizations that decided not to participate are interested in co-hosting a town hall with the BMCHRC in the spring. Radewan and Shadday expressed interest in the Commission's participation.
- ii. Shermis informed the Commission that the most recently appointee to the Commission on the Status of Black Males has said he can't fulfill his duties due to a large class load. Commissioners were urged to search for good candidates for this role. Bangert expressed concern over the trouble the Commission has had finding good candidates. Jackson asked if the Commission could ask the City to issue a press release or public statement. Shermis answered that Commission openings are listed on the website and in an occasional press release, but that this isn't in that category. Sparks will post an announcement on the Commission's Facebook page.
- iii. Shermis invited Commissioners to attend the International Family Welcome Orientation



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by MCCSC to promote the Commission and its work. The same activity and prizes will be given out as were provided for the ADA Anniversary celebration. Jackson and Williams agreed to facilitate. Shermis will arrange for the supplies to be given to them the necessary materials for the event table. Radewan offered to help with the development of age appropriate activities that would focus on human rights.

- iv. The Second Quarter quarterly report was presented for approval. Radewan stated the Eviction Prevention Project no longer has the word "housing" in its title and therefore mentions of this entity need amended in the Report. Bangert made a motion to approve the Report, pending the needed changes regarding the Eviction Prevention Project. Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Reports from Commissioners:

None.

Unfinished Business

- i. Radewan asked for an update on Safe Haven discussion. Shadday delayed discussion to be presented under Other Business.

Open Cases

- ii. Williams' disability discrimination case has completed Complainant interview. Respondent and witness interviews to be scheduled and completed in 2-3 weeks' time.
- iii. Shadday and Radewan's sexual harassment case was discussed. Shermis asked for the opinion of the Commissioners and Brittingham regarding the non-responsiveness of a crucial witness. Shadday confirmed the Commission's ability to subpoena witnesses. Brittingham stated that the Commission can subpoena witnesses and hold parties in contempt, but that we cannot compel them to speak. Shermis pointed out this witness didn't seem to have a problem speaking with us, just that they responded erratically. Discussion ensued regarding the specific communication with the witness in this case and how to proceed.
- iv. Bangert's racial discrimination case is pending Complainant's review of settlement agreement.



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- v. Gray's racial discrimination case from the County Commission was found NPC. Findings and letter are in the process of being written for mailing. Gray suggested an additional solution for the Respondent that will be offered to them.
- vi. Coover's disability discrimination case is pending official withdrawal from Complainant. Certified letter to be sent with a 30-day deadline to return.
- vii. Gray's disability discrimination case has completed the Complainant interview. Respondent interview to be scheduled.
- viii. Jackson's proposed case was outside of BMCHRC jurisdiction and was transferred to HUD.
- ix. An additional, unassigned case is still awaiting a signature notary. Complainant has missed four appointments with Sparks to notarize.
- x. One more unassigned case will not be pursued, per the Complainant.

New Business

- i. Elections were held for the positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Bangert nominated Shadday to continue as the Chair for the remainder of the year. Discussion was had regarding perceived conflict for Radewan to take a position of influence on the Commission versus her commitments outside of the Commission. Bangert nominated Radewan as the Vice-Chair after the Commissioners and Brittingham discussed this matter. Gray asked about duties related to the position of Secretary and stated her limitations for that role. Jackson nominated Gray after the Commissioners discussed this matter. Jackson moved to approve the slate. Bangert seconded the motion. Slate was approved by a unanimous vote of 7-0.
- ii. Shadday presented the Duties and Responsibilities of Commissioners document. Shermis discussed key points on the list, focusing on the need to separate public statements made on behalf of the Commission and statements made on behalf of a Commissioner speaking in an individual capacity. The solution to say that a person is not speaking on behalf of the Commissioner. Further discussion ensued regarding this matter.
- iii. Dr. Markay Winston's visit has been confirmed for the September meeting. Shermis reminded Commissioners that representatives from the Commission on Youth and Children and the Commission on the Status of Women will be present at the meeting to listen to Dr. Winston's presentation, specifically anything that might pertain to the Student Equity Ambassadors.



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New Cases

None.

Other Business

- i. Shadday discussed the Safe Haven Resolution. Shadday stated he has had a chance to obtain an audience with Council members and they stated a concern that the adoption of a resolution in Bloomington would bring undue burden on the City in regards to media outlets and the scrutiny of Todd Rokita. Clarifying questions were presented on behalf of the Council members in contact with Shadday regarding the benefits and risks of adopting a less political ordinance surrounding gender affirming healthcare concerns. Shermis will send the Kansas City resolution to Commissioners.
- ii. Radewan asked if any Commissioners were following up on concerns previously presented by Mark Haggerty as they pertain to the new jail site. Gray stated she is following meetings and issues. Radewan and Bangert would both like synopses of these meetings; Gray agreed to send them out.
- iii. Radewan asked if any Commissioners would be willing to speak at a meeting for the Monroe County Community Health Improvement Plan committee to outline the work of the Commission and assist with the creation of a resource guide. Shermis stated his intent to speak on October 9.

Public Input

- i. Najla Routsong and Patty Moon, as representatives of CAPS, presented the findings of a public safety report, which made recommendations on alternate ways the City can improve safety outcomes while reducing cost and crime. Jackson asked why Beacon was not on the list of agencies providing support of the proposal. Routsong stated Beacon's response was indicative of a lack of staffing that affects their ability to endorse this project. Jackson asked if there had been outreach amongst the interfaith community. Routsong responded that the outreach is in an organizational phase at this time, with interfaith and public outreach to follow. Williams suggested reaching out to IU Grad students for assistance with student engagement. Radewan suggested the Commissioners read the entirety of the report, as it contains a lot of beneficial information. Routsong asked for an endorsement by the Commission.

Adjournment: Shadday adjourned the meeting at 6:11 p.m.