



**Bloomington/Monroe County  
Human Rights Commission**

**August 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes  
Hooker Conference Room, City Hall  
5:00 p.m.**

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission met at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 19, 2024, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

**Commissioners Attending:** Stephen Coover, Autumn Crisovan, Susan Gray, Amy Jackson, Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams (online via Zoom)

**Staff Attending:** BMCHRC Director Michael Shermis, Assistant City Attorney Enedina Kassamanian, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier, Taylor Brown (Office of the Mayor)

**Public Attending:** Nohemi Lugo (City of Lafayette Human Relations Commission Vice Chair)

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**Call to Order:** Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes of July 15, 2024 Meeting**

1. Coover moved to approve. Gray seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 5-0 (Commissioner Jackson arrived a few minutes late and missed this vote).

**Report from Staff**

1. **Commission on the Status of Black Males Appointment:** Cornelius Wright, a longtime member of the CSBM who has served as the chair, submitted an application to rejoin the commission. Shermis requested to move forward without a full interview process, as Wright is clearly qualified. A vote will be held during New Business.
2. **HRC Mayoral Appointment:** Waiting for the Office of the Mayor to select the appointment from the three applications submitted.
3. **Downloadable Initial Intake Form:** Inspired by the City of Lafayette Human Relations Commission's intake form, we have updated our intake form to require the complainant to select the area of discrimination and their protected class. A downloadable and/or printable version can also increase accessibility to the document. Commissioners reviewed the document. Commissioner Gray suggested specifically stating that we cannot investigate law enforcement entities, which complainants may see as separate from local government.
4. **Closed Captioning Implementation Update:** The implementation process is being designed and carried out via meetings with relevant stakeholders. Part of the roll-out process will be volunteers going to local businesses with a selection of informational brochures on Council for Community Accessibility and BMCHRC initiatives.
5. **PrideFest Sticker/Tabling Update:** Stickers to hand out at PrideFest were designed and

purchased, at around \$100 for 1000 stickers. The PrideFest table has been reserved for \$175 and it has been confirmed that we can bring our own canopy for free. Around \$275 of the budgeted funds for PrideFest were spent.

### **Reports from Commissioners**

1. Commissioner Jackson pulled together materials for the ADA Anniversary Celebration; Commissioner Williams tabled at the event. The event went well, with many people participating in the activities, especially kids.
2. Commissioner Gray tabled at the ADA Anniversary Celebration with ABLES, an autism social group.

### **Open Cases**

1. Coover's race discrimination in employment case: This case is pending closed with a \$15,000 settlement offer, the BMCHRC's largest in history.

### **Assignment of New Cases**

1. None.

### **Unfinished Business**

1. None.

### **New Business**

1. **Recommendations to Improve Municipal Equality Index Score:** The Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index application has been submitted; we will lose points in some areas but receive flex points in others. A few items where we lost points could be pursued by the Commission in the coming year.
  - a. **Conversion Therapy Ban, All-Gender Restrooms Required City-Wide:** These issues would require municipal ordinances through City Council.
  - b. **Inclusivity Efforts:** Within the City, Director Shermis may have leverage to improve all-staff diversity training by requesting that Human Resources add LGBTQ+ issues. HR has added the LGBTQ+ Culture Center to their mailing list, increasing recruitment efforts within the LGBTQ+ community.
  - c. **Bullying Policy:** Parks and Rec runs youth programs and has a harassment policy but not an explicit bullying policy; Director Shermis can speak to them about creating this policy. If the City adopts certain language, we can share it with other community spaces and organizations.
  - d. **Services to LGBTQ+ Community:** Chair Shadday stated his disappointment that Bloomington markets itself as a welcoming place for the LGBTQ+ community but most resources and services for LGTBQ+ people are within Indiana University. Community spaces have diminished over the past 5-10 years. Bloomington Pride puts on PrideFest but does not run other programming throughout the year. Commissioners discussed directing money to organizations who provide services to the LGBTQ+ community. Jackson mentioned Melanie Davis, a host on BloomingOut and active in Bloomington's queer community, who has been interested in starting a local community center but has lacked sufficient financial support. Shadday stated that he could contact her. Crisovan

- can contact the founder of the LGBTQ+ community center in South Bend.
- e. Commissioners stated their interest in the BMCHRC and the City working to encourage new resources and services to get off the ground.
  2. **Appointment of Cornelius Wright:** Coover moved to forgo the interview and treat Wright's appointment as a reappointment due to his outstanding credentials. Jackson seconded. Unanimously appointed, 6-0.

**Public Input**

1. None.

**Adjournment:** Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m.