



**Bloomington/Monroe County
Human Rights Commission**

**October 21, 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, October 21, 2024, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

Commissioners Attending: Stephen Coover, Autumn Crisovan, Amy Jackson (online via Zoom), Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams, Lilliana Young

Staff Attending: BMCHRC Director Michael Shermis, Assistant City Attorney Enedina Kassamanian, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier

Public Attending: Macy Olds, Maxwell Prentice, Abigail Traywick (IU School of Social Work students), Alexa Hartenbach (intern for Isak Asare)

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

Approval of Minutes of September 16, 2024 Meeting

1. Coover moved to approve the minutes from September 16, 2024. Crisovan seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 5-0-1 (Young abstaining).

Report from Staff

1. **Commission Appointments:** Lilliana Young has been appointed to take a mayoral seat; this is her first commission meeting. Susan Gray has resigned from a county seat due to her upcoming move out of the country. After discussion with CFRD Director Shatoyia Moss, Director Shermis wrote a letter to county commissioners detailing the BMCHRC's current demographics and the importance of filling obvious gaps in those demographics, with the hope that they will select a candidate that makes the commission more diverse.
2. **Third Quarter Report:** Jackson moved to approve the quarterly report; Young seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 6-0.

Reports from Commissioners

1. Commissioner Young: Discussed a potential case of discrimination based on gender presentation, specifically regarding uniforms and whether a business can require an employee to wear pants if a skirt better matches their gender presentation. Kassamanian said it would depend on circumstance: if everyone must wear pants, or if there is a dress code distinction based on gender, etc.
 - a. Director Shermis brought up two local cases with restaurants, including one related to restaurant dress codes. The other, a high-profile recent case in our jurisdiction, was filed with ICRC, but EEOC is now taking the case over. Shermis asked EEOC why the BMCHRC is not receiving the case; since it was filed directly with ICRC/EEOC, it will not return to us.

Open Cases

1. Shadday's case: National origin discrimination in housing. Interview completed and letter sent to respondent; awaiting response. When the respondent did not collect USPS certified mail, Shermis taped letter to their door.

Assignment of New Cases

1. Two potential cases in progress:
 - a. Racial discrimination in employment: Efficient intake interview and affidavit nearly ready; Shermis will be meeting with Kassamian on a few legal points. Jackson will be assigned to this case and is ready to interview complainant next week.
 - b. Racial discrimination in employment (Spanish-speaking): More complicated as the complainant has provided less information. This case, if filed, will be assigned to Crisovan, who has Spanish knowledge.
2. Out-of-jurisdiction case: Staff assisted a complainant to file an Ellettsville racial discrimination in employment case with the EEOC. The advantage is that the case went to the front of the EEOC queue because of the BMCHRC's assistance, while someone filing online would go to the end of the queue.
3. Discussion of anonymous complaint from a party of LGBTQ+ individuals alleging sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination at a restaurant. Shadday is interested in sending testers to the restaurant.

Unfinished Business

1. **MEI:** Jackson and Shadday met with Mel Davis, who is interested in starting a Bloomington LGBTQ+ community center. Jackson and Shadday agreed to be on the board as private citizens and are seeking applications for other board members.
 - a. Shermis will talk to Parks and Rec about bullying policy and to HR about including LGBTQ+ in diversity training. It will likely be January before discussion can begin in earnest.
 - b. MEI report will be released on November 21 with an accompanying social media campaign. The results remain embargoed for now.

New Business

1. Following Commissioner Gray's resignation, Shadday called for the election of a secretary. Coover nominated Crisovan, who accepted; Williams seconded. Appointed unanimously by roll call vote, 6-0.

Public Input

1. None.

Adjournment: Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 5:46 p.m.