



**Bloomington/Monroe County  
Human Rights Commission**

**February 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes  
Allison Conference Room, City Hall  
5:30 p.m.**

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission met at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, in the Allison Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

**Commissioners Attending:** Sharon Baker (online via Zoom), Amy Jackson, Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams, Lilliana Young.

**Staff Attending:** BMCHRC Director Michael Shermis, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier, CFRD Director Shatoyia Moss, Assistant City Attorney Taylor Brown.

**Public Attending:** Melanie Davis.

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**Call to Order:** Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and presented the Land and Labor Acknowledgment.

**Approval of Minutes of January 21, 2025 Meeting**

1. Young moved to approve the minutes from January 21, 2025, with the correction of a typographical error. Williams seconded. Passed by roll call vote, 5-0.

**Report from Staff**

1. None.

**Reports from Commissioners**

1. None.

**Open Cases**

1. Baker's case: Disability discrimination in housing. Currently communicating with the respondent after replying to their position statement.
2. Jackson's case: Racial discrimination in employment. In the process of closing the case as the complainant did not attend two consecutive meetings and has stopped participating in the process. Communicated that a lack of response would be an automatic withdrawal.
3. Young's case: Disability discrimination in housing. Received position statement from respondent. Seeking further clarification on some points and deciding how to proceed.
4. Shadday's case: National origin discrimination in housing. Respondent signed a consent agreement after probable cause finding and were given a deadline to submit the payment, which they have missed significantly following several reminders through their lawyer. The next potential escalation would be to send a demand letter from the Legal department.

### Assignment of New Cases

1. Two individuals are scheduled for an intake interview this week. One potential case alleges disability discrimination in employment, while the other alleges race discrimination in public accommodations.
2. A complaint of gender identity discrimination in public accommodation may not result in a formal case. The complainant and respondent are working to mediate the issue with Shermis's assistance.
3. A recent complaint of housing discrimination seems unlikely to result in a case as the individual alleges religious discrimination against himself without clearly stating that he is a member of the religious group he mentions.
4. The next two cases will be assigned to Williams and Coover.

### Unfinished Business

1. **Revision of Voting:** CFRD Director Shatoyia Moss spoke about the voting issue encountered after the January meeting. A vote of 3-0-4 was interpreted as not passing, as a majority of commissioners present did not vote yes. However, the Legal department was split on whether it should have passed, as a majority of commissioners who voted on the issue voted yes.

The BMCHRC does not have bylaws governing voting issues. In the past, Barbara McKinney and previous commissioners found that bylaws were not necessary, as the rules and regulations govern complaints and cases and individual procedural issues could be dealt with as they arose.

Moss stated that the Commission has the authority to create those bylaws. At this point, any issue where the Commission cannot come to a decision will default to Moss to determine.

Shadday tabled the issue for now, to be considered when the full Commission is present.

2. **Commissioner Appointment:** Commissioner Crisovan has stepped down from her City Council appointment. Those appointments are considered on a rotating basis, and Moss will look into when the BMCHRC seat will be considered. At that point, the BMCHRC can send guiding questions to Council to help them select a candidate that is dedicated to the Commission's goals and mission. To ensure that there are a range of qualified applicants, Commissioners should promote themselves in relevant spaces and invite friends and colleagues to apply.
3. **Annual Report Approval:** Williams moved to approve the annual report with a minor style amendment. Baker seconded. Passed 4-0-1, Jackson abstaining.
4. **Art/Essay Contest:** Flyers have been sent to local schools, afterschool programs, and other groups. They have also been placed on downtown bulletin boards and a Spanish-language flyer was included in the Boletin newsletter.
5. **Trans Rights Issues and Resolution:** The Commission discussed the draft of the Safe Haven Resolution for Transgender Life. The BMCHRC's new assistant attorney, Taylor Brown, had not yet looked into what policies existed but provided insight about how the City is approaching risk assessment given federal executive orders eliminating transgender civil rights and DEI initiatives. For example, the phrase "safe haven" could be targeted by the broad searches used by the federal government. Moss provided additional insight on the importance of being careful and not risking a broad range of

programs that rely on federal funding. Young agreed that she understood but expressed discouragement that upper levels of government could work so quickly to eliminate rights but that Bloomington cannot work quickly to protect them. Williams suggested that we should be intentional not only with the language but with the intended outcomes and should not push without result. Discussion of the possibility of alternatives to show that the City ensures protection and support for the trans community, although concrete alternatives were not determined. A special meeting on this issue exclusively was scheduled for March 3.

### **New Business**

1. **Resistance Resources:** Jackson provided a useful resource created by UNC Chapel Hill for its faculty which gives resources and help for what to do if you are approached by ICE for information about students or coworkers. She suggested a similar document for Bloomington nonprofits and businesses. Rather than a red card, which assists an individual at risk of being stopped by ICE, this resource would help others in the community know what to do.

Williams, who works pro bono with Indiana Legal Services, knows that ILS is doing Know Your Rights trainings. She stated that ILS may have useful resources already and that she would inquire.

Baker has information used to train ushers and community members at First Methodist Church, which has refugee families in the congregation; she will share this information as well.

Discussion of passing out this information at tabling events or linking it on the BMCHRC website. This would fit within our purview of educational programs.

### **Public Input**

1. Melanie Davis: The city of Worcester, MA, has just made itself a safe haven for transgender people. Their meetings are available online and could be referred to for insight.

**Adjournment:** Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.