

**Minutes of the February 23, 2022 Joint Meeting of the
Monroe County Human Rights Commission
and the
Bloomington Human Rights Commission**

The Monroe County Human Rights Commission and the Bloomington Human Rights Commission met in a joint meeting on Wednesday, February 23, 2022, beginning at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Present for this meeting for the county commission were commissioners Byron Bangert, Doris Parlette, Goldburn Maynard, Jr., Kathleen Sideli, Eric Sader and Susan Gray, as well as Jeff Cockerill, county attorney. A quorum was present.

Present for this meeting for the city commission were commissioners Byron Bangert, Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Erin McAlister, Latosha Williams and Valeri Haughton-Motley. Absent with notice was Ryne Shadday. Absent without notice was Pam Jackson. A quorum was present. Also present was Barbara E. McKinney, BHRC director/attorney.

Present from the public were four students from Sader's class at Indiana University.

Call to order and roll call: Sader called the meeting to order and took the county roll. Calloway-Thomas took the city roll. Sader welcomed the BHRC. Each commissioner introduced him or herself.

Conversation with Bloomington HRC regarding projects and issues in the community: Sideli said that the two commissions realized they should get together more formally instead of just meeting during the annual Fourth of July parade.

McKinney said that Nicole DeCriscio Bowe, BHRC assistant, had won a grant from the Lilly Lead Forward project and the BHRC was working on workshops on fair employment, fair housing and diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as a clean-up day. She said she would send more information to the county as plans develop and she would welcome help from the county.

Sader said that the county had been working a lot on criminal justice issues. Cockerill said that the county had finished a large study on how to help people before and after they enter the criminal justice system. Its focus is preventative, helping people not re-enter the system.

Calloway-Thomas said she is the co-chair of the city's future of policing task force and said they had not received a lot of cooperation from the county.

Cockerill suggested contacting another county attorney, Lee Baker. Sader said new leadership in the county sheriff's office as of January, 2023, might help.

Bangert asked if Cockerill meant that the county's focus was no longer on the facility but rather on programs to keep people out of jail. Cockerill said no, the county was still focused on issues at the facility. Bangert noted that the BHRC has shown interest in jail issues in the past, including touring the facility and meeting with the jail commander.

Williams said the BHRC was also interested in homelessness issues and mentioned the high profile stories on the issue, such as the city's removal of people from Seminary Square Park. She said she was surprised the city does not have a commission focusing on homelessness issues, but noted the city has a number of shelters. She said that the Bloomington ordinance includes housing status as a protected category and asked if the county ordinance does; it does.

Sader noted that the county had a group pushing housing as a human right and said the county HRC is interested in these issues as well.

Sader said that the work of both commissions is investigating complaints. Related to that is letting people know that the HRCs exist and can help. McAlister said she would like to see more education and outreach.

McKinney said that she gets many calls from people who don't have human rights complaints. She makes referrals to the appropriate entity, but is frustrated not knowing how many people had human rights complaints but didn't know to call the BHRC. It's an ongoing struggle.

Sideli said she wonders if the high profile criminal race discrimination cases, such as the George Floyd case, help people be more aware that they can get help with non-criminal race discrimination issues.

Gray said the jail survey went nowhere and she would like to see it get carried forward.

Sader said he would like to see the jurisdiction of the county HRC expand beyond the unincorporated areas of the county. He said that Ellettsville had been approached but was not interested.

BHRC approval of expenditure for an ad in the Monroe County

NAACP's souvenir booklet: McKinney said that the BHRC had been approached again to run an ad in the NAACP's souvenir booklet for its annual banquet, and that she had approval from the corporation counsel to pay for a half page ad for \$75. Cockerill said that the county had received the same request. Bangert suggested that the city and county do a joint ad. Calloway-

Thomas moved that the BHRC approve such an ad; Haughton-Motley seconded. Calloway-Thomas took the BHRC roll; passed unanimously. Sader asked if the county had the budget to run an ad; Cockerill said he could probably find the funds. Gray moved that the MCHRC approve such an ad, if funds are available; Parlette seconded. Sader took the roll; passed unanimously.

Review and approval of January MCHRC meeting minutes: Sideli moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Parlette seconded. Sader took the roll. Passed unanimously.

The commissioners agreed to try to have joint meetings about twice a year.

Public comment: No public comment.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara E. McKinney, director, BHRC/assistant city attorney