

## **BLOOMINGTON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of September 26, 2022 Meeting**

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission met at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, September 26, 2022, in the McCloskey Conference Room of Showers City Hall. Present for this meeting were commissioners Ryne Shadday, Erin McAlister, Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Byron Bangert, Tonda Radewan, Pam Jackson and Valeri Haughton-Motley. A quorum was present. Also present were Dr. Markay Winston, deputy superintendent of curriculum for MCCSC, and Barbara E. McKinney, BHRC director/assistant city attorney.

**Call to order:** Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

**Approval of minutes of August 22, 2022 BHRC meeting:** Bangert moved that the minutes be approved as presented. McAlister seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Welcome to newest member of the BHRC:** The BHRC welcomed Tonda Radewan to the BHRC. Radewan introduced herself, and the commissioners and director introduced themselves.

**Guest speaker:** Shadday introduced Dr. Winston from MCCSC. Dr. Winston reported that she oversees the Office of Curriculum & Instruction and provides oversight and supervision to numerous programs and building principals. One specific area of her responsibility also includes adoption of curricular resources for the corporation. She said they try to actively engage the parents and the community in the resource adoption process. She said this was the first time the community has been involved in that process.

She also oversees major discipline of students. One of the strategic plan goals for the corporation is to reduce disparities in student discipline. Dr. Winston and her team are actively working with building administrators and staff to monitor discipline data. In addition, Dr. Winston reported that MCCSC is actively training corporation staff on restorative practices to help mend relationships. They are working on strategic planning to improve their minority employee recruitment and retention.

One current project that Dr. Winston reported on includes the development of student equity ambassadors. The students are helping come up with an anti-racist, anti-micro aggression policy and are working on how to enforce the policy. They hope to have the policy ready by January. This was motivated by students coming to a board meeting in May to share their experiences with racism at MCCSC. They are starting to involve middle school students in this process.

Jackson said she was excited to hear that they are including middle school students. She said that by high school, students have developed their own coping mechanism.

Calloway-Thomas asked if the micro aggressions go both ways, meaning are both minority and majority students on the receiving end of such actions. Dr. Winston said that mainly people of color and GLBT students are on the receiving end.

Jackson asked how MCCSC polices social media. Dr. Winston said that it's challenging, but students have to comply with the student's code of conduct even when on social media.

McAlister said she was happy to hear what MCCSC is doing. She said she and her children moved to Indiana from Maryland, and it's been an eye-opening experience for them to live here. She said she tried to talk to the principal about her concerns, but the principal was very defensive. Some people feel like it's not worthwhile to pursue complaints.

Dr. Winston said they are working with principals and all educators on how to be models on how to deal with these sensitive issues.

Calloway-Thomas said what she heard from students in the BHRC'S last essay contest is at odds with what she is hearing from Dr. Winston. She said the problems are more pervasive than she thought.

Shadday said that he has heard that admissions counselors in other communities are reluctant to refer GLBT people of color to Bloomington because of the climate.

McAlister said that people don't speak up. She said maybe we need to do a survey like the Commission on the Status of Women is doing. We need to provide an anonymous way to report.

Dr. Winston said they have installed a tip line where people can be anonymous. People with actual complaints have used it; some people use it as a prank.

Calloway-Thomas said that she hoped that MCCSC could provide a cocoon of comfort and also teach students how to respond to issues in the future.

Dr. Winston said they really want students to use their voice.

Everyone thanked Dr. Winston for participating in the discussion and said the commission would welcome her back anytime.

**Reports from commissioners:** none.

**New business**

**Essay/art contest:** McKinney asked the commissioners to look at the list of previous themes and think of ideas for the 2023 contest.

**Human Rights award:** Tabled until October.

**Future plans:** McKinney said that the administration is planning to ask the council to transfer the duties of the director to the CFRD and to merge the BHRC with the MCHRC to create one commission that would have jurisdiction over the city limits and the unincorporated areas of the county. The plan is for the county to help fund the director job. This should allow for the director to create more educational programming. An attorney in the legal department will be assigned to the BHRC to provide legal advice as necessary.

**Annual report:** McKinney said she planned to follow the format of previous annual reports unless any commissioners had other ideas. No ideas suggested.

**Assignment of new cases:** No new cases.

**Other business:** No other business.

**Public input:** No public input.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara E. McKinney, director/assistant city attorney