



**Bloomington/Monroe County
Human Rights Commission**

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

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

Commissioners Attending: Stephen Coover, Autumn Crisovan, Tonda Radewan (on Zoom), Amy Jackson, Susan Gray, Ryne Shadday (Chair), Emma Williams. A quorum was present. Attendance was taken via roll call.

Staff Attending: BMCRHC Director Michael Shermis, Assistant City Attorney Audrey Brittingham, and BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier.

Guests: Lilliana Young

Contract Compliance Committee Call to Order

Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

1. **Contract Compliance Regulations Revisions:** Brittingham brought up proposed revisions and invited questions. The document is substantively the same as last time. No questions. Jackson moved to approved new regulations. Williams seconded. Passed unanimously via roll call vote, 5-0.

Contract Compliance Committee Meeting Adjournment

Shadday adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

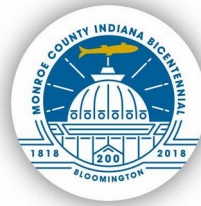
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Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. New Commissioner Crisovan introduced herself.

Approval of Minutes of January 22, 2024 Meeting

Gray puts in a clarification to rephrase a mention of assigning prison housing based on biological sex, as the current phrasing is confusing.

Coover moved to approve minutes of January 22. Gray seconded. Passed unanimously via roll call vote, 6-0.



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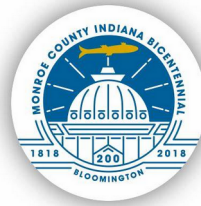
Officer Elections

Shadday opened floor for nominations. Coover nominated to reappoint Shadday, Radewan, and Gray as a slate for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Radewan suggested appointing a new vice chair as she is so active in the community on issues of fair housing and wants to avoid conflicts of interest. Shadday nominated Williams for Vice Chair. Jackson moved to elect Shadday, Williams, and Gray as Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Coover seconded. Passed unanimously via roll call vote, 7-0.

Report from Staff

1. **Hate Incidents Report:** Shermis introduced the document, which had been shared prior to the meeting. Due to the technical, online form error discussed at the previous meeting, no response was made to incidents last year, which is represented in the document. Coover asked about an incident discussed at a prior event that was not present in the report. Shermis clarified that it had not been classified by the Bloomington Police Department as a hate crime and that the individual had not reported it formally to the BMCHRC, asking Brittingham how it should be classified. It is currently listed as a miscellaneous call. Brittingham stated that, because anyone aware of the incident could report it, it could be included as an amendment. Radewan asked for it to be listed and for relevant miscellaneous calls to be mentioned in the report to avoid underreporting. Shermis asked to rework the report over the next week and vote on it formally next month.

The incident in question was classified as an assault, not a hate crime, by the BPD. Gray and Coover discussed that similar hate incidents may not be shared with the BMCHRC. Young asked for details to the incident to be sent to her; Shermis will send them over. Radewan pointed out that we should better publicize the reporting process, as there must be more hate incidents in the calendar year. Gray asked if the BPD could share any information about assaults, etc., that are also hate incidents. Shermis and Brittingham state that that is not possible but that the people involved should be told to submit a hate incident report to the BMCHRC at the same time. Brittingham will check whether people are told this when they report crimes to the BPD. Discussion about mental health issues coming in to Shermis as hate incident reports. Williams asked for clarifications on what happens with the reports



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and how the BMCHRC can increase education on the issues in question. Jackson asked if it was shared in the newsletter. Shermis agreed that statistics could be put in the newsletter.

2. **Understanding Discrimination Brochure:** Radewan shared several revisions to the draft. Williams suggested some additional visual revisions. Crisovan agreed. Jackson shared excitement that the draft is getting closer to the final version.
3. **Commission on Status of Black Males Appointment:** The BMCHRC has an appointment to the Commission on the Status of Black Males. One applicant to the BMCHRC expressed interest in serving. The Commission will interview them at the next meeting.

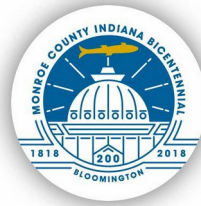
Reports from Commissioners

1. Williams brought information from Safe Streets for All Steering Committee, which she is a part of. The committee is discussing bringing pedestrian accidents down.
2. Williams tabled for the BMCHRC at the Black History Market on Saturday. It was a great event and many people came. Shermis was also present and shared that someone had come to the table with interest in filing a complaint.
3. Radewan shared information about the Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission's Reimagining Safety film screening and panel discussion on February 24 and 25.

Open Cases

- i. Jackson's case needs to be withdrawn due to lack of response from complainant after multiple communication attempts. Jackson moved to withdraw her current case for non-communication. Williams seconded. Passed unanimously via roll call vote, 7-0.
- ii. Jackson has just taken on a new sex discrimination public accommodation case. An initial interview will take place in a few days.
- iii. Gray's disability discrimination in housing case is continuing. Interviews with complainants and respondents have taken place. It currently looks like a NPC, but Gray and Shermis would like the two sides to come to an agreement.
- iv. Radewan's disability employment discrimination is ongoing. Waiting for a position statement from the respondent, which is due in the next few days.

New Cases



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- i. Shadday will be taking a case soon. Discussion of a case in private education and BMCHRC's jurisdiction. Brittingham says she has not found anything that precludes us investigating it.

Unfinished Business

- i. **Safe Haven from Anti-Transgender Laws Update:** Shermis shared that he gave the ordinance draft to the CFRD department head, who has brought it to the mayor's office. Waiting to hear back on how it will be proposed to the common council. Montgomery and Young have been named as resources. Brittingham advised that the appointing county commissioners be kept up to date.
- ii. **Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation: Transgender Identification/Gay Marriage:** HB 1291 is dead due to the Indiana General Assembly not acting on it before a deadline. They may bring it back up next year.
- iii. **Age Limitation on Complaints:** Revisions were brought for discussion. Coover asked if an emancipated minor would have an advocate. Brittingham stated that it would be legal to require anyone under 18 to have an advocate, even if the minor is emancipated. Brittingham will add that revision. Jackson moved to approve with that revision. Coover seconded. Passed unanimously via roll call vote, 7-0.
- iv. **Human Rights Award:** No nominations. The deadline was extended to the 28th. Shadday opened nominations to the commissioners to suggest individuals. Potential nominees were discussed.
- v. **Arts/Essay Contest:** Since Bangert is no longer serving on the commission, Coover agreed to serve as the art judge. Shermis stated that the superintendent intended to speak about the contest with principals. Jackson has shared the contest with Project School teachers. WonderLab passes will be acquired as prizes. Jackson asked about turnaround time for choosing winners; Shermis said roughly 7-10 days.
- vi. **Police Responses and Commissioner Statements:** Brittingham responded to questions from the previous meeting. Police cannot be directed to deprioritize crimes against a community or to more heavily prosecute members of a certain community. The state cannot pass a law making it possible. The Commission would need the approval of both the commissioners and the mayor's office to



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make a statement on a state bill. One person would read a statement and would not take questions. Jackson agreed that it would be more effective to make a statement as an individual.

New Business

- i. Radewan: Every year in April is Fair Housing Month. Radewan would like to hold an event or outreach in April to acknowledge and will return to the topic at the March meeting.
- ii. Shermis asked Brittingham to present on investigations next month. Brittingham has taken on several other time-consuming responsibilities but will do her best to prepare something. Discussion of potentially delaying the presentation until Crisovan returns.

Public Input

- i. Young asked whether, if someone reports a transgender individual using a bathroom, the police can deprioritize those complaints. Brittingham: No, the police cannot make a decision to enforce or not enforce certain laws. In response to the discussion last time, Shermis reached out to the Monroe County prosecutor, who responded that deprioritizing those calls would put the prosecutor in the crosshairs of Indiana's Attorney General and thus she cannot take an official position. Jackson shared that the Attorney General always has its eyes on Bloomington to punish the city for progressive stances.

Adjournment

Shadday adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.