



**Bloomington/Monroe County  
Human Rights Commission**

**March 18, 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, March 18, 2024, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

**Commissioners Attending:** Stephen Coover, Susan Gray, Amy Jackson (on Zoom), Tonda Radewan, Ryne Shadday.

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

**Public Attending:** Lilliana Young, London Montgomery, Eileen Badder.

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

**Approval of Minutes of February 19, 2024 Meeting**

1. Gray moved to approve. Radewan seconded. Passed unanimously via roll call vote, 5-0.

**Report from Staff**

1. Discrimination brochures are available for Commissioners to claim whenever needed. Coover gave out about 50 of them at the Ivy Tech job fair.
2. **Annual Report:** Radewan suggested changes over email; those have been incorporated. Jackson requested an extra day or two to look over it. Shadday suggested 48 hours for everyone to review, with consensus that it would be accepted and passed if there are no changes to be made at that time. All agreed.

**Reports from Commissioners**

1. None.

**Open Cases**

1. Gray's disability discrimination in housing case is nearly closed. Complainant's intent to withdraw form is in the mail. Withdrawal based on the fact that landlord agreed not to charge any extra fees for breaking the lease early.
2. Radewan's disability in employment case is ongoing. Employer has provided a position statement. Complainant is preparing their response to that position statement and will send it in the next few days.



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3. Jackson's sex discrimination in public accommodation is ongoing. Jackson and Shermis interviewed the complainant. The respondent's position statement describes a radically different story from the complainant's original story. Shermis is requesting a complainant response.

### **Assignment of New Cases**

1. Shadday was assigned a case of discrimination in private education when complainant and Director Shermis had finalized a substantial affidavit describing a long and complex case. However, the affidavit was not signed as the complainant chose to delay, potentially until summer. Shadday is locked in for now as he has read the draft affidavit.
2. Two new cases coming in: disability discrimination in housing (fairly straightforward), racial discrimination in employment (seems to be a fairly complex case). One will go to Williams and one to Coover.

### **Unfinished Business**

1. **Safe Haven from Anti-Transgender Laws:** Following the injunction being struck down at the end of February, gender-affirming healthcare for minors is now banned in Indiana. The Mayor's office has also suggested that commissions should pause on releasing statements about current issues without City approval. However, as of today, the Mayor's office has approved the BMCHRC sending the Safe Haven resolution to City Council for their consideration.
  - a. London Montgomery and Commissioner Radewan asked about the lead time for City Council to consider this issue. Director Shermis aims to send them the resolution tomorrow, but thinks it will take at least a week or two for them to read it and put it on the agenda. City Council will likely tweak the document. Commissioner Shadday expressed that we wrote and approved the document with specific language because it is what we believe is the most protective and viable option and because it was done with our partners in the trans community, and that Director Shermis should suggest that they not tweak the language.
  - b. Lilliana Young/London Montgomery expressed availability for unofficial/official conversation at any point in the process.
  - c. Commissioner Gray sent the resolution to Penny Githens from the County Commissioners. Githens immediately got back that it would be passed to County legal.
  - d. Commissioner Jackson: City has made profound public statements in the past, i.e. after Roe v. Wade, but has not made a public statement after the injunction was removed. She suggested a joint statement on the issue coming from the City and the Commission. Shadday expressed that we should focus on the resolution first but contact people personally.
  - e. Discussion about whether London Montgomery and Lilliana Young should go to



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City Council meeting for public comment before or after council members have seen the resolution.

2. **Human Rights Award:** Shadday suggests pushing decision to April due to Williams's and Crisovan's absence. Commissioners agree. Jackson suggests that anyone here today can privately communicate their vote to Shermis in the case they are absent in April.
3. **Arts/Essay Contest:** There have been no submissions yet. Due date Wednesday, March 20 (in 2 days). Approved to extend the deadline three weeks to Friday, April 12.

### **New Business**

1. **Commission on the Status of Black Males Candidate Interview:** Eileen Badder introduced herself. She has lived in Bloomington for nine years. She has previously lived and worked in Chicago and worked with disadvantaged children and schools there alongside her career in finance. Much of this work was in diverse schools. She now works with individuals with developmental disabilities supporting their independence and employment. She was a Head Start advocate for SCAAP working with disadvantaged families of preschoolers and finding resources and services for them. Has also volunteered with local churches, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Describes herself as passionate, likes to speak up, believes everyone is entitled to a voice. Has ideas that she thinks would be useful to the CSBM. Commissioners asked questions of Ms. Badder about her experience and perspectives. After the interview, commissioners thanked Ms. Badder for her time and she departed while commissioners discussed the appointment. Commissioners appreciated her background working with individuals in disadvantaged communities but wanted to clarify that the Black community is very diverse socioeconomically. After discussion, Coover moved to appoint, Radewan seconded. Passed unanimously via roll call vote, 5-0.
2. **Fair Housing Month:** Radewan shared information about fair housing month. Fair housing exhibit will come to City Hall in May. In the past, HRC and HAND have worked together to create educational programming. Shermis shared that HAND has a new director as of today. Shermis will go to the new director to talk about new programming beyond the exhibit. Radewan suggested tabling event including more than one department. Include fair housing content on Facebook and in the newsletter.
3. **Eviction Prevention Project:** Radewan pointed out that many referrals in the past year went to the Eviction Prevention Project, but that this project has lost funding. We need to look into where these referrals will be going in the future.

### **Public Input**

1. None.

**Adjournment:** Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.