

BLOOMINGTON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes of February 22, 2021 Meeting

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission met on Monday, February 22, 2021, beginning at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom. Present for this meeting were commissioners Ryne Shadday, Byron Bangert, Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Valeri Haugthon-Motley, Latosha Williams and Erin McAlister. Pam Jackson was absent without notice. Also present were Nicole DeCriscio Bowe, BHRC legal assistant, Dave Askins from BSquare Beacon and Barbara E. McKinney, BHRC director/attorney.

Call to order: Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:30 and called the roll. To accommodate visitors, Shadday shifted the agenda slightly.

Approval of minutes of January 25, 2021 BHRC meeting: The commissioners approved the minutes by consensus.

New business

Introduction of new commissioner, Erin McAlister: McAlister said she is originally from Mitchell, Indiana. She has worked in the human rights field and is happy to be part of the BHRC. The other commissioners and staff welcomed her and introduced themselves as well.

Presentation from Sue Owens: Owens said she works in the City's Community and Family Resources Department as the staff liaison for the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Aging. The CSW's activities include the Women's Annual History Month Celebration and the Leadership Development conference, both held in March. They also offer scholarships and are currently working on a form of the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for Bloomington to adopt on, listening sessions and on opposing the shackle law. She said the Aging Commission is working on digital literacy for seniors, the Lifetime Community concept and Dementia Friendly public accommodations.

Williams asked if the CEDAW proposal addressed pay equity issues; Owens said she thought it did.

Calloway-Thomas asked how old the CSW is and what significant contributions Owens felt it had made. Owens said it is 37 years old, and its pride and joy is celebrating women each March. She said new activities include the legislative subcommittee and the listening sessions, which will focus on concerns of Black women. Calloway-Thomas asked why that was the focus of the listening sessions; Owens said because of the events of 2020 and BLM. She asked if rural women would be included in the listening sessions; Owens said yes.

Haughton-Motley observed that seven of the nine current judges are women and they have contact with broad sectors of the community. She suggested that the listening sessions include judges; Owens said she liked that idea.

Bangert asked what the shackle law is; Owens explained it allowed prisons to shackle female inmates during delivery.

Owens said she believed that her commissions would be happy to partner with the BHRC on any of their activities. The commissioners thanked her for attending.

Election of officers: After discussion, Calloway-Thomas moved that the BHRC elect Shadday as the 2021 chair. Haughton-Motley seconded. Shadday called the roll; passed unanimously.

Shadday moved that the BHRC elect Williams as vice-chair. Calloway-Thomas seconded. Shadday called the roll; passed unanimously.

Haughton-Motley moved that the BHRC elect Calloway-Thomas as secretary; Bangert seconded. Shadday called the roll; passed unanimously.

Joint meeting with Monroe County Human Rights Commission:

McKinney said she had talked to Margie Rice, her counterpart with the MCHRC. They would like to schedule a joint BHRC/MCHRC meeting to talk about how the two commissions could work together. Rice suggested March 24 at 5 p.m. for her. At Shadday's suggestion, McKinney will email the Bloomington commissioners to see if March 24 works for the majority.

Unfinished business

Facebook live discussion: Shadday said he would like to table this item until all of the commissioners are present.

2021 Goals and Objectives: Shadday said that given it's already February, he would like to pivot on this. We will have this on the agenda for the rest of the 2021 meetings, discussing overall goals for 2022 at each meeting.

Homeless proposal: The commissioners discussed the proposal going to the Bloomington Common Council on February 23, to in most cases ban the City from removing people who are camping in City parks without 15 days' notice, and then only if certain types of housing are available. Bangert said he supported the proposal but had reservations about the language concerning the City holding on to property taken from the parks and unclaimed property. Calloway-Thomas said she would abstain on the vote, but had to leave the meeting before the vote was taken. Williams moved

that the BHRC endorse the proposal, with comments about the reservations. Bangert seconded. Shadday called the roll. In favor: Bangert, Williams and Shadday. Abstaining: McAlister and Haughton-Motley. The motion passed.

Assignment of new cases: No new cases.

Other business: No other business.

Public input: No public input.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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