

BLOOMINGTON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

And

MONROE COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes of April 26, 2021 Meeting

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission met on Monday, April 26, 2021, beginning at 5:35 p.m., via Zoom for a joint meeting with the Monroe County HRC. Present for this meeting were members of the BHRC: Ryne Shadday, Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Byron Bangert, Pam Jackson, Erin McAlister and Latosha Williams; and members of the MCHRC: Vauhxx Booker, Will Smith, Doris Parlette, Kathleen Sidell, Susan Gray, Also present were Margie Rice, Monroe County attorney; Barbara E. McKinney, BHRC director/assistant city attorney, Nicole DeCriscio Bowe, BHRC assistant, and Dave Askins from B Square Beacon. A quorum of each commission was present.

Call to order: Ryne Shadday, chair of the BHRC, called the joint meeting of the BHRC and the MCHRC to order at 5:35 p.m. Members of both commissioners introduced themselves during the roll call; staff introduced themselves as well.

Approval of minutes from the March 22, 2021 BHRC meeting:

Haughton-Motley moved that the minutes of the March 22, 2021 BHRC meeting be approved. BHRC approved by consensus.

Approval of minutes from the March 24, 2021 MCHRC meeting:

Parlette moved that the minutes of the March 24, 2021 MCHRC meeting be approved. MCHRC approved by consensus.

Discussion about cooperative efforts between MCHRC and BHRC:

McKinney said that she and Rice had been discussing ways for the two commissions to work together to achieve their mutual goals. They had discussed creating parallel web pages to help the public better know what the commissions can and cannot do, continuing to march in the 4th of July parade together and working on joint education efforts, perhaps after the end of the pandemic. She noted that she had sent out a link to the BHRC's web page text and asked the commissioners what thoughts they had to improve it and adapt it for the MCHRC.

Bangert said the text needed a better statement about the jurisdiction of the MCHRC.

Shadday said there should be a link to the MCHRC on the city's web page.

Booker said we should consider an interactive map so people can find out if their issue occurred within the jurisdiction of the MCHRC or the BHRC.

Bangert said the text made it appear that the BHRC deals only with complaints; we should add information about our educational and advocacy efforts.

Calloway-Thomas agreed. She said we should publicize the highlights of what we do, make it more visible.

McAlister suggested having sections, one on complaints, one on advocacy and education, one on events.

Johnson said we should list past and future activities.

Smith said he likes how thorough the City's information is, but reading it requires scrolling. He suggested using an accordion style presentation, so people can click on what they are interested in.

Williams said we should explain how the two commissions are different.

Rice said the biggest difference is our different jurisdictions. Other than that, we operate very similarly and largely have the same ordinances.

Williams said we need to look at the information from the perspective of a citizen. We don't want to appear to be pushing them off. We should explain why people should consider filing a complaint.

Rice said that it seemed our way forward is as follows: she, McKinney, DeCriscio Bowe and Martha Selk (her assistant) work together on updating the text. We can work with our IT departments to update the language and adapt it for the county, incorporating some of the suggestions the commissioners have made.

The commissioners discussed having a uniform form for people to report a problem, and then staff could decide whether the problem was a complaint that could lead to an official charge of discrimination, a bias incident report or a micro aggression.

McKinney expressed concerns about encouraging people to report problems that we can't address in any meaningful way.

Jackson said this fits in with previous discussions the BHRC has had about getting data about the sense about how things are going in the community. It would be a way to show the community we care.

Calloway-Thomas had concerns about encouraging people to report micro aggressions, as that is a poorly defined term. She also had concerns about first amendment issues.

Sidell said we should start with easy things first, such as updating the web pages for both commissions.

The commissions agreed to participate in the 4th of July reverse parade together. McKinney asked for volunteers to build a good float.

Booker suggested the two commissions consider having annual or biannual joint meetings.

Public comment: No public comment.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara E. McKinney, director, BHRC