



City of Salisbury
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 12, 2019

Committee Members Present

John Wright, *Chair*
Mark Decker
Amber Green
Nance Held
D'Shawn Doughty

Committee Members Absent

Chalarra Sessoms
Billy Earl Amos
Marcel Jagne-Shaw

In Attendance

Laura Baasland, *Department of Water Works Program Specialist*
Kaisha Young
Briana Murphy

The Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC) met at 6:00p.m. in Conference Room #306 of the Government Office Building

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:10p.m. by Rev Wright and began with introductions for the two members of the public in attendance.

Last Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from August, taken by Ms. Massey, were acknowledged. Ms. Green requested that two changes be made for accuracy and Mrs. Baasland stated that she would make those amendments. A motion to approve the last meeting minutes with the two changes that Ms. Green requested was brought forth by Mr. Decker and seconded by Ms. Green. The motion carried by a unanimous vote in favor.

Open Public Forum

Rev Wright offered the open forum to the members of the public in attendance, and Ms. Murphy asked about what inadequacies there may be police training to address the school to prison pipeline. She asked if the City has a Youth Diversion Mediation Program, to which Ms. Green replied that Tri-Community Mediation may meet those needs. Rev Wright offered to include this topic as an agenda item for the next meeting and Ms. Green expressed support for that idea and said that this involves a discussion that needs to be had. Ms. Green also suggested considering inviting a County Council member to the next HRAC meeting.

Concerns about Alcohol Permits

Mr. Doughty, Vice President of the Salisbury Jaycees, expressed some concerns over how alcohol permitting for events is handled in Wicomico County. He stated that the Jaycees have secured alcohol

permits in the past for a multitude of events, including Third Friday, but recently encountered trouble trying to get an alcohol permit for an urban event. This is a public event in its second year, but the Wicomico County Board of License Commissioners had reservations about granting an alcohol permit for the event and cited safety concerns as the primary cause. Ms. Green feels that this decision was racially motivated due to the nature of the event, and said that this is not the first time that a person of color or an urban event has had trouble getting an alcohol permit from the County. According to Mr. Doughty, he was treated unkindly by the Wicomico County Board of License of Commissioners and was even threatened that if this event were to be granted a permit and then something bad happened, the Salisbury Jaycees would never again be permitted for Third Friday.

Rev Wright asked how alcohol permits are issued for City events, and Ms. Green explained that the City does not have its own alcohol board, so all regulation in Salisbury is through Wicomico County. Rev Wright asked if that meant that the County could then effectively shut down any City event by denying alcohol permits, and Ms. Green explained that that is more or less true. Rev Wright said that the local chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and he will be applying for an alcohol permit for a Pride event next year, and he expressed concern that they County could make it difficult.

Several Committee members, including Mr. Doughty, Ms. Green, and Rev Wright discussed their concerns at the County level and how it affects the City of Salisbury, and even suggested that the County would benefit from its own Human Rights Advisory Committee to address these issues. The Committee had many questions about the Wicomico County Board of License Commissioners, including wanting to know: how the liquor board was formed, who is elected to the appointed to the board and how, how was the attorney for the board selected and why, what involvement and participation does the City have on the board, and more. The HRAC determined that they would like to sit down with the County Council to discuss their concerns, and they would like to invite the Council to their next meeting. On a motion by Ms. Green and seconded by Ms. Held, the Committee voted unanimously to invite the County Council to their next meeting in October. Mrs. Baasland said she would discuss this with the Mayor before reaching out to the Council to ensure there is no breach of protocol.

National Folk Festival

Rev Wright asked members if everyone made it to the National Folk Festival (NFF) and if so what their thoughts were on the event. Everyone confirmed that they were there and the consensus was that it was a wonderful event that everyone very much enjoyed. Ms. Held asked why some groups were permitted to fundraisers, such as Bennett High School, but other groups, such as the Boy Scouts, were not. The Committee responded that that would be a question for the NFF Manager, Caroline O'Hare, and that there was most probably a logical reason.

Committee Membership

Ms. Held raised the point that the Committee should address their membership and try to recruit some new members since the Committee is not at the number specified in the bylaws. On a motion by Ms. Green and seconded by Ms. Held, the Committee decided by unanimous vote in favor to discuss youth recruitment strategies and efforts at the next meeting.

Questions for Chief Duncan

The Committee would like to invite Chief Duncan to attend an HRAC meeting and ask her some questions about training for Salisbury Police Department (SPD) for juvenile and community policing. Ms. Murphy asked if Salisbury has an Unarmed First Response team and Ms. Green responded that locally there is an agency called Mobile Crisis that serves as unarmed first response and is trained in crisis intervention, but not many know about them or to ask for them. The Committee decided to draft questions and talking points for Chief Duncan on their own and bring them to the next meeting for review.

Maryland Lynching Memorial Project

The Committee decided to move this discussion to the next meeting due to time constraints.

Fight for \$15 Minimum Wage

The Committee decided that instead of taking on a Fight for \$15 Minimum Wage effort, they feel that the focus should instead be on lowering the cost of living in Salisbury relative to the wages. The Committee discussed concerns about the costs of housing and basic necessities such as groceries. Ms. Green mentioned that she would like the City to develop a business-centric advisory committee to address concerns such as these, and the Committee agreed to discuss it at the next meeting.

Next Meeting & Adjournment

The next HRAC meeting was set for Thursday, October 10, at 6p.m. in conference room 306 of the Government Office Building. On a motion by Mr. Decker, seconded by Ms. Held, and carried by unanimous vote in favor, the HRAC meeting was adjourned at 7:09p.m.

Minutes Taken By: Laura Baasland, *Department of Water Works Program Specialist*

