



City of Salisbury
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
June 11, 2020

Committee Members Present

Reverend John Wright, *Chair*
Nance Held
Billy Earl Amos
Ron Pagano
Stephen Feliciano
Marcel Jagne-Shaw
Chalarra Sessoms
Amber Green
D'Shawn Doughty

Committee Members Absent

Mark Decker

In Attendance

Julie English, Mayor's Office Administrative Assistant
Benjamin Pheasant, Member of the Public

The Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC) met at 6:00p.m. virtually using Google Meet

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:13p.m. by Rev Wright and began with introductions of everyone in attendance. The Committee welcomed Benjamin Pheasant as a recent applicant to join HRAC.

Last Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from May were acknowledged. A motion to approve them as written was brought forth by Ms. Held and seconded by Mr. Amos. The motion was carried by a unanimous vote in favor.

Open Public Forum, Current Events & Local Issues

Appreciation was extended to D'Shawn and Amber for all they've done recently with the activists, protests, and Black Lives Matter. A discussion was had on getting upcoming events out to the public so everyone is aware of the details.

Winder Sign

Mr. Amos discussed the statement he wrote for the committee to present to the Mayor explaining the reasoning for the removal of the sign. Rev. Wright pointed out one correction that needs to be made before proceeding. Ms. Green shared that several young downtown business owners have started working together on a petition to get the sign removed. A motion to move forward with sending the statement to Mayor Day was brought forth by Mr. Feliciano, seconded by Ms. Held and followed by a unanimous vote in favor.

Mr. Feliciano suggested the committee formulate a 'narrative' in response to questions the community may ask in response to several of the actions being taken in the community and also by the committee. The Committee agreed that this should be communicated as a human rights issue rather than a political issue. Ms. Green followed up with the importance of educating the community. Rev. Wright clarified that the role of HRAC is to advise the Mayor and that protocol should be followed with regard to what means are used to put out the information.

A decision was made by the committee to schedule a Work Group on June 23rd at 5pm to discuss policies and procedures with regard to posting on social media and website updates. Ms. English will follow up with the Executive Office prior to the work group and email the information ahead of time for review.

Maryland Lynching Memorial Project: Task Force Update

Ms. Green reported that the last 2 meetings were canceled due to protests going on. She also mentioned that the City received a check through a grant from AFSCME to NAACP to be used for this project. The Lynching Memorial is scheduled to be up by Spring 2021.

Renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day

A memo was reviewed to rename Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Mr. Amos motioned to approve the memo as is and Mr. Feliciano seconded. The next step will be to present the memo to the Mayor.

Mr. Feliciano provided an update about reaching out to others in the Indigenous population. He was only able to find the Nanticoke Indian tribe but has not received a response as of yet. He has also spoken with individuals from South America and has ideas if/when the Mayor sends out a press release.

Ms. Green recommended we focus on the mixed population.

Second Amendment Sanctuary Statement

Ms. Held motioned to approve the document as written and was seconded by Ms. Green.

Letter of Congratulations to Julia Glanz

No changes to the letter were discussed. Letter will be forwarded to Ms. Glanz, Acting Mayor.

Committee Membership

Rev. Wright announced he will be stepping down as Chair of HRAC once his term expires in November 2020. He will remain on the committee but would like to allow someone else to take the reins. Ms. English reviewed the term expirations for all current members as well as the process to be reappointed to the committee. She will look into what the bylaws state with regard to what positions and representations are required on the committee.

The committee requested a summary of what the various roles entail.

Ms. English to process the paperwork to get Benjamin Pheasant appointed to the HRAC. After Mr. Pheasant is appointed, there will be two vacancies on the committee. There are three applications pending for appointment on the committee that will be emailed to all members for review.

Ms. Green suggested the possibility of having sub-committee's rather than increasing the number of members allowed on the HRAC. Mr. Feliciano requested we hold on to the applications of those who do not get appointed to the HRAC for future reference if sub-committees are created. Ms. English located the bylaws and will email to all members.

Member bios should be sent to Ms. English. She will work with Mrs. Baasland to get the webpage updated.

Roles and Relationships with Police Forces

Discussion was had on other police departments doing away with their entire department and starting over, as well as some disbanding or no longer being funded. There was conversation on the importance of the relationships with youth and police as well as with City police and County police. Ms. Green acknowledged the funding for the Salisbury Police Department is going to support community needs such as our youth and mental health.

After Ms. Held shared her personal response and feelings after viewing the body cam footage of the youth in Salisbury, there was interest in scheduling an event to educate the members of the committee on how many African American youth grow up and the circumstances they deal with that play a role in how they respond and react to different situations.

Juneteenth City Holiday

HRAC would like to move forward to have June 19th declared an official holiday in the City of Salisbury. Ms. English will contact Ms. Glanz to determine what is needed to make this happen. Mr. Pagano will work on putting a Proclamation together to submit to Ms. Glanz in an effort to expedite the process.

Next Meeting & Adjournment

The next HRAC meeting was set for Thursday, July 9, at 6p.m. and will again be held virtually. On a motion by Mr. Pagano, seconded by Mrs. Held and carried by unanimous vote in favor, the HRAC meeting was adjourned at 7:45p.m.

Minutes Taken By: *Julie English, Mayor's Office*