



City of Salisbury
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2020

Committee Members Present

Reverend John Wright, *Chair*
Billy Earl Amos
Mark Decker
Ben Pheasant
Stephen Feliciano
Ron Pagano
Chalarra Sessoms
D'Shawn Doughty

Committee Members Absent

Nance Held
Amber Green
Marcel Jagne-Shaw

In Attendance

Laura Baasland
Tyler Anderson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by Rev Wright and began with introductions of all in attendance.

Current Events and Open Public Forum

Mr. Doughty spoke about the Citizen's Advisory Council, a 12-week course that has been newly resurrected after ten years with the goal of improving policing in the community. The Council learns about policing and attempts to bridge gaps between the community and the police.

Rev Wright gave an update about the weekly food distribution being done through the Fenix Youth Project. He stated that there were fewer people who came to pick up boxes than had been anticipated, which he suspects is because the previous week's boxes contained a note from President Trump. The boxes came from the Maryland Food Bank, and were not opened by those distributing them until approximately half of them had already been distributed. Because the food comes from the USDA, a federal entity, each box contains a letter from the President. There is concern that these boxes could have harmed the reputation of the Fenix Youth Project.

Mr. Decker raised for discussion the topic of the Executive Director of the Wicomico County Library, Ashley Teagle, resigning and the reasons she cited for doing so. Ms. Teagle reported experiencing blatant racism and homophobia during her time as Director. Mr. Doughty gave an overview of her presentation, and the Committee discussed the impacts of this situation and how to potentially respond to it. Mr. Pagano suggested that the Committee consider drafting an open letter to the community taking a strong stance against the human rights concerns raised by this situation. Mr. Jagne-Shaw questioned the goal of the letter, and Mr. Pagano explained that it would be a way for the

Committee to demonstrate to all citizens of Salisbury that the HRAC is committed to addressing these issues in our community, as well as spread awareness. Mr. Pagano and Mr. Amos will work together to put together a draft letter to present to the Committee for review. Mr. Jagne-Shaw suggested that the Committee reach out to Ms. Teagle and the County Council for comment.

Review of Minutes

A motion to accept the minutes as written from the September meeting was put forth by Mr. Decker and seconded by Mr. Amos; the motion carried by unanimous vote in favor.

Amend Committee Bylaws

Mr. Amos made a motion to accept the resolution and memo as written and Mr. Feliciano, motion carried by unanimous vote in favor.

Indigenous Peoples' Day

Mrs. Baasland informed the Committee that at the upcoming City Council meeting on Monday, October 12, 2020, the City Administrator Julia Glanz will proclaim Columbus Day shall henceforth be recognized as Indigenous Peoples' Day in the City of Salisbury.

Position Descriptions & Officer Election

The position descriptions for Vice Chair and Secretary will be sent to Mrs. Baasland for compilation and redistribution to the entire Committee. Those members who are interested in officer positions will email Mrs. Baasland to let them know what position they are interested in and officers will then be elected at the next meeting.

Statement on Handling of Police Incident

Rev Wright will draft a statement on behalf of the Committee and send it to Mrs. Baasland for editing before it is submitted to the Mayor's Office.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

There was some discussion about whether or not to change the monthly meeting from the second Thursday to another day, but no new day was agreed upon, so the next meeting will remain on the second Thursday of the month and the committee will consider this proposal further. The next HRAC meeting will be held on Thursday the 12th of November at 6pm on the virtual platform Google Meets, and will likely be the last meeting of the year. A move to adjourn the meeting was put forth by Mr. Amos, seconded by Mr. Decker, and carried by unanimous vote in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17pm.

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