



City of Salisbury
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2020

Committee Members Present

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

Committee Members Absent

Marcel Jagne-Shaw

In Attendance

Julie English
Laura Baasland
Johannah Cooper
Haleigh LaChance
Keith Merkey, Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm by Rev Wright and began with introductions of all in attendance.

Review of Minutes

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

Amend Bylaws

Members discussed changes they would like to make to the committee bylaws. There was discussion of a possible residency clause, but that was ultimately cast aside. A motion to amend the bylaws to remove the requirement to have at least one high school student as a committee member and instead change that requirement to be "at least one Youth Representative aged 16-24" was put forth by Ms. Held and seconded by Mr. Pagano and was carried by unanimous vote in favor. Mr. Amos then put forth a motion to reduce the terms of the committee members from four years to two years, and that motion was seconded by Ms. Held and carried by unanimous vote in favor. Mrs. Baasland will draft a resolution to be brought to City Council to amend the bylaws and provide it to the committee for their review.

New Appointments

Committee members that were present at the last work group meeting discussed two applications: Tyler Anderson and Mackenzie Engelbrecht. Mr. Anderson had been attending meetings recently and participating in discussion, and Ms. Engelbrecht had attended at least one meeting as well. A motion to approve Tyler Anderson for membership and recommend his appointment to the Mayor was put forth by Mr. Amos and seconded by Mr. Doughty and carried by unanimous vote in favor. The committee discussed that the only remaining membership category left to fill is a high school student, which will soon be changed to a youth representative position. The remaining applicants to the committee will have their age taken into consideration to see if they meet the specific criteria. Mrs. Baasland will contact the applicants and explain the requirement to have a youth representative as laid out in the bylaws, and ask that the applicants disclose their ages.

Position Descriptions

Per the last work group session, certain committee members were tasked with coming up with position descriptions for the various officer roles of the committee. Rev Wright and Mr. Pagano wrote a description for the position of Chair, Mr. Pheasant and Mr. Amos wrote a description for the position of Vice Chair, and Mr. Decker and Mr. Feliciano wrote a description for the position of Secretary. Mr. Feliciano summarized the goal of the drafts for the benefit of the members who were not in attendance at the work group. The position description for the Secretary was discussed and it was determined that some things previously assigned to the Secretary should instead continue to be the responsibility of the Liaison. A brief overview of each of the descriptions for Chair and Vice Chair was also given, and the drafts of each will be sent to Mrs. Baasland for compilation.

Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Ms. Held will draft a memo asking the Mayor to recognize January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month and send it to Mrs. Baasland to be delivered to the Mayor's Office. Mr. Pagano offered to collaborate with Ms. Held to get the draft written.

Current Events and Open Public Forum

Mr. Decker raised the topic of the recent communication between the committee and the City regarding the canine police search that had been called into question. He felt that the response from all three levels of government about the incident was somewhat disrespectful of the committee's responsibility to inquire about these types of things. The committee all agreed that if the city was unable to comment further on the traffic stop or extrapolate, that should have been clearly communicated as long as an explanation as to why. Rev Wright, Mr. Decker, and Mr. Amos will collaborate to draft a memo to the Mayor regarding the committee's position on this issue.

Indigenous Peoples' Day

It was requested that Mrs. Baasland seek an update from the Mayor's Office regarding the memorandum that was sent by the committee suggesting that the City proclaim that Columbus Day shall be renamed Indigenous Peoples' Day. Mrs. Baasland will reach out to the Mayor's Office and follow up with the committee.

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 8th of October at 6pm on the virtual platform Google Meets. A move to adjourn the meeting was put forth by Mr. Pagano, seconded by Ms. Held, and carried by unanimous vote in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

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