



City of Salisbury
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2021

Committee Members Present

Stephen Feliciano, *Chair*
Amber Green, *Vice Chair*
Ben Pheasant, *Administrator*
D'Shawn Doughty
Reverend John Wright
Ron Pagano

Committee Members Absent

Marcel Jagne-Shaw
Tyler Anderson

In Attendance

Laura Baasland
Councilwoman Angela Blake
Julia Glanz
Dr. Michele Schlehofer, PFLAG
Mark DeLancey, PFLAG
Johannah Cooper
Logan Prushansky
Cinzia Lombardo
Hannah Cechini, WMDT

Call to Order

The meeting began with a few moments of silence for each member to center themselves, as well as a breathing exercise. The meeting was officially called to order at 6:09pm by Mr. Feliciano. Each individual in attendance then introduced themselves.

Review of Minutes

A motion to accept the minutes from the February meeting as written were put forth by Ms. Green and seconded by Mr. Doughty; the motion carried by unanimous vote in favor.

City of Salisbury Social Equity and Strategic Inclusion Initiative

Julia Glanz introduced the City's Social Equity and Inclusion Strategic Initiative that is currently in development and discussed the City's motivation for such a program. She then yielded to the Mayor's Office Intern Johannah Cooper who shared a presentation explaining the initiative and the plan the City has outlined. Ms. Cooper and Mrs. Glanz then answered questions from the committee, including how the City plans to identify and include stakeholders as this process moves forward. Mrs. Glanz also notified the committee that the City is making an attempt to be more inclusive in their signage throughout the community by adding multiple languages to signs throughout the City, and they will be starting with parks.

Mr. Feliciano pondered how the broader community could be involved in this initiative and with HRAC as a whole. Hannah Cechini of WMDT explained that when the newsroom is looking for stories to start the day with, they turn to social media and press releases. She praised the City of Salisbury for having a very active presence on social media, and advised that HRAC can bolster their online and social media presence in order to get more exposure. Rev Wright asked what the future is for this

Social Equity and Inclusion Strategic Initiative document, and Mrs. Glanz informed the group that once it has this group's endorsement, it can be taken before Council and voted on.

Mr. Feliciano asked for a motion to adopt the City's initiatives and continue further discussion. The motion was put forth by Ms. Green and seconded by Rev. Wright.

HRAC Certification/PFLAG Proposal

Rev Wright explained the LGBTQ Friendly Certification the he has been developing for the guests in attendance. The idea is that a business can meet a particular set of criteria to earn a certification from HRAC as an LGBTQ Friendly business, and they can display that designation in their marketing. The guidelines for qualification have been drafted in a document that Rev Wright provided the committee and it is attached to these minutes. He views the certification process that he is working on developing as a companion piece to the City's Social Equity and Inclusion Strategic Initiative. In his research while developing this proposal, Rev Wright was surprised to find not a single program already in existence that he could model our own after, and he mused that we may be one of the first communities to come up with a program such as this.

Dr. Schlehofer is part of the Safe Spaces training team through Salisbury University, and she elaborated on the proposal that PFLAG has developed for this committee. The proposal includes a two-part training for organizations, each portion is an hour-long session, and it includes how to attract LGBTQ patrons and make them feel safe and welcome in their establishment, as well as how those organizations can attract LGBTQ employees. Dr. Schlehofer also raised the issue of funding and discussed that this initiative will need some amount of monetary support to carry it. Mrs. Baasland had briefly discussed funding with Mrs. Glanz, who advised the committee to seek a grant. Mr. Pagano suggested that the HRAC reach out to the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore to seek a grant.

Rev Wright posed the question to this committee as to whether or not this is a necessary program, as he feels that it is, but he wanted input from the rest of the committee. Mr. Feliciano expressed support for the initiative, as did Mr. Pagano, who also said he would even like to see a similar initiative for the disabled community. Mr. Pheasant emphasized the importance of bringing community members into the fold and involving them in the planning process, which Dr. Schlehofer seconded.

The committee is in agreement about moving forward on this initiative, and Mr. Feliciano said that the group will continue to discuss and develop this; it will be on the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Ms. Green suggested that the trainings not be so one-size-fits-all as far as organization type, and be slightly more tailored to specific types of businesses to be more relevant to each business. Mr. Pheasant posed the question to the committee as to how they will handle issues that do arise and what the protocol will be for that. Rev Wright and Mr. Pheasant will work together on this moving forward. Mr. Delancey reminded the group that this proposal is only the first part of this initiative and it will certainly grow and evolve as time goes on, and Dr. Schlehofer discussed that more individualized criteria can easily be folded in as necessary. Dr. Schlehofer also provided their contact information for further collaboration: SalisburyPFLAG@outlook.com and/or mmschlehofer@salisbury.edu.

Human Rights Award

Mr. Feliciano informed the committee that he and Mr. Pagano have been working on developing the Human Rights Award. The award will recognize an individual who has done exemplary work for human rights in our community. Mr. Pagano explained that the award would have a nomination process and would be given on an annual basis. He has been developing a guideline for the criteria that will be shared with the group soon.

HRAC Social Media Page

In the interest of time, Mr. Feliciano moved this agenda item to the following meeting.

HRAC Membership

Mr. Feliciano opened the floor to the two applicants in attendance, Ms. Logan Prushansky and Ms. Cinzia Lombardo. Both individuals discussed their interest in joining the committee and gave a little bit of background on themselves. Ms. Prushansky is 22-years-old and therefore would represent the youth community. A motion was put forth by Rev Wright and seconded by Ms. Green to move forward with the member applications and forward them to the Mayor's Office for appointment, and the motion carried by unanimous vote in favor.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next HRAC meeting will be held on Thursday the 8th of April, 2021 at 6pm on the virtual platform Zoom. A move to adjourn the meeting was put forth by Rev Wright, seconded by Mr. Pagano, and carried by unanimous vote in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21pm.

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

LGBTQ Friendly Business Certification – Draft

The goal of the Safe Space Community Campaign is to identify and educate business entities who will affirm and support all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Businesses displaying the Safe Space Community Campaign symbol are committed to combating hatred and discrimination through assistance and support of their LGBTQ+ employees and respect for their LGBTQ+ customers. Participating businesses will be able to demonstrate and market themselves as safe destinations for the LGBTQ+ market with progressive policies and practices as well as exceptional service standards.

Participating businesses will receive a sticker to be placed at the business' point of entry, and a picture with the Mayor to be shared on social media. Additionally, participants will have their logo added to the City's website under a new section touting SSCC certified business.

The Safe Space Community Campaign will:

- Provide guidance on resources available to achieve criteria
- Review all SSCC applications to ensure criteria have been met
- Provide each SSCC businesses with City issued logo for display on all advertising
- Display company logo on City's SSCC website
- Provide an opportunity to have the company's picture taken with the Mayor for posting to social media

In order to become SSCC certified, participating businesses promise to:

- Complete the application form.
- Display SSCC logo on all advertising
- Require "safe space" training at least every 2 years for all employees.
- Comply with all City, State and Federal non-discrimination laws
- Designate an "LGBTQ+ Advocate" with access to senior management to address concerns/problems
- Have an equal opportunity employment policy stating that a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, characteristics or expression cannot be used as a criterion for personnel decisions.
- Provide an accepting, supportive atmosphere for employees who identify as LGBTQ+
- Not permit sexist, homophobic, transphobic jokes or comments.
- Serve all eligible customers, suppliers and distributors with respect and courtesy, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender expression/identity
- Contribute in some way to one or more (local, regional or national) pride events during the year.
 - Examples might be:
 - Sponsor an event, performer, or just the festival in general
 - Help promote the event – fly a rainbow flag during Pride month; post fliers.
 - Offer an item for raffle at a pride event
 - Offer discounts during Pride
 - Fly a rainbow flag