



CITY OF WHEELING HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1500 Chapline Street, Room 305
Wheeling, WV 26003

COMMISSIONERS

Bryant Anderson

Frank Calabrese

Rev. Ralph W. Dunkin

Elisa Hickman

David Miller

Loma Nevels

Emily L. Ward

Wheeling Human Rights Commission

Regular meeting of the Wheeling Human Rights Commission: April 19, 2022.

Commissioners present: Anderson, Calabrese, Dunkin, Miller and Ward.

Commissioners absent: Hickman and Nevels.

City of Wheeling Staff present: Thompson and Delbert.

CALL TO ORDER

A roll call was held. With a quorum present, the business meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Chairman Dunkin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular meeting: March 15, 2022. The minutes had been previously emailed. Commissioner Ward motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Anderson. The motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

SWPALS 2021 Education and Outreach Project The 2021 Agreement with the Fair Housing Law Center at Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services ran from April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022. The HRC committed to 35 hours of Education and Outreach under the 2021 Agreement. Ms. Thompson reported that the HRC achieved the full 35 hours before the deadline of March 31. She reported that the HRC hosted Fair Housing training for Landlords at the Ohio County Public Library on March 22 from 3:00-5:00 pm, that there was a press release about this on March 18, followed by a newspaper article on March 21, and a channel 7 News interview aired on March 22. Eight attended, including staff and two commissioners, whose time contributed towards the required hours.

Second Annual Community Award for Someone Who Supports Human Rights Chairman Dunkin asked Ms. Thompson to inquire about the date of the Mayor's 2022 State of the City address (later confirmed to be July 26, 2022). The nominee for the award is to be determined.

The Crown Act, and Resolution on Conversion Therapy Chairman Dunkin reported his belief that City Council will take up the Crown Act at a later time, as the first reading for the Conversion Therapy Ordinance is tonight, and the second reading would be on May 3. Ms. Delbert indicated that people wishing to be heard can sign up to speak at the meeting.

HRC Support for Inclusion Coordinator There was no new information regarding this potential City position.

Fair Housing Month – April 2022 Chairman Dunkin indicated that six billboards were in place Fair Housing Month in addition to the Fair Housing Proclamation which was read at the City Council Meeting on April 5 at noon, with three members of the HRC in attendance to receive the Proclamation.

City Council's ARPA Funding Survey (\$29 million Covid Grant) at www.wheelingwv.gov Chairman Dunkin reminded and urged the members of the HRC to take time to do the survey.

Future Meetings Discussion Chairman Dunkin asked whether the HRC wished to hold the May meeting virtually or in person. Commissioner Calabrese stated that he felt it was best to decide one week prior to the meeting, as before. Commissioner Ward agreed, and Commissioners Miller and Anderson believed that meeting in person would be fine.

Chairman Dunkin asked if there was a motion about future meetings, to which Commissioner Miller motioned to table this discussion until the May meeting, and Commissioner Calabrese seconded. The motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

SWPALS 2022 Education and Outreach Project Ms. Thompson reported that the HRC has entered into a new 2022 Agreement that began on April 1, 2022 and runs through March 31, 2023. The HRC is again committed to 35 hours of Education and Outreach under the 2022 Agreement. She asked that members continue to look for ways to achieve Fair Housing Education and Outreach.

Commissioner Vacancies Chairman Dunkin acknowledged that there remained two vacancies on the HRC and stated that he had emailed two suggested individuals' resumes to the Mayor.

Citizen Inquiry/Complaint Activity Log through April 15, 2022 Ms. Thompson reported that the Activity Log, which had been emailed, is confidential, and that we may not discuss the specifics of any case in a public meeting. She stated that there had been a few calls resulting in one referral to Legal Aid and another individual scheduled to come in for an appointment to discuss a potential housing complaint. No new complaints had been received.

OTHER ISSUES REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS:

No other issues regarding human rights were discussed.

THOSE WISHING TO BE HEARD:

Carlee Dittmar stated that she would be attending tonight's City Council Meeting, and spoke briefly about the proposed ban on Conversion Therapy, and how it affects parental rights.

Julia Chaplin, also speaking about Conversion Therapy, stated that she disagreed with City Council having a second reading of the Ordinance during a noon meeting, and believed that the public comments should be allowed when people are more available.

Bryan Minor, from the Catholic Diocese, stated that he was attending this meeting to gain a better understanding of Conversion Therapy, and what the end result is to be accomplished.

REMARKS FROM MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:

Commissioner Calabrese stated that people who feel strongly about Conversion Therapy should become better informed about both sides in order to make an informed decision, as opposed to an emotional decision. These are not new issues, just are now more apparent with the availability of information.

Commissioner Ward stated that she has not seen the Ordinance regarding Conversion Therapy, but as a pediatrician, these are difficult issues. Evidence-based decisions need to be made based upon the totality of the issue. She suggested the need to respectfully listen to children and help them on their individual journeys.

Commissioner Miller stated that he supported doing away with Conversion Therapy because it may be harmful to the individual. The issue is now up to City Council, so any concerns should be brought to City Council.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Commissioner Calabrese made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:44 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Ward. Motion approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ralph Dunkin
Chairperson

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