HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING
May 19, 2022 Minutes

Hybrid In Person and Virtual Meeting

Commissioners present: in person - Bob Ford, Bianca Chang, Joan Hash, Lynda Earle, Peter Hwang, Nina Basu; virtually present - Kui Zhao, Jonah Hornum, Tiffany Releford

Absent: Scott Markow, Gabriel Terrasa, Sahara Ukaegbu

Staff Present: Yolanda Sonnier, Kathy Morales

Legal Counsel: Melissa Goldmeier

I. CALL TO ORDER
Bob Ford chaired on behalf of Scott’s absence and called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

II. GUEST SPEAKER: The Honorable Clarence Lam, State Senator for District 12

Senator Lam represents District 12 (Howard and Baltimore County). He introduced himself. He was the first Asian American to represent the Maryland State Delegation. He discussed two bills he had introduced: SB46 which establishes that the discovery or perception of, or belief about, another person’s race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, whether or not accurate, does not constitute legally adequate provocation to mitigate a killing from the crime of murder to manslaughter; and establishes that a certain discovery or perception of, or belief about, another person’s race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation is not a defense to the crime of assault in any degree. The second bill: SB462 which requires the State Board of Education, in collaboration with local school systems, to develop content standards for expanded American history; requiring each county board of education, in collaboration with the local school system, to develop and implement certain curriculum guides for expanded American history.

III. PUBLIC FORUM
No one from the public was present.

IV. APPROVAL OF April 21, 2022 MINUTES
Passed with minor edits. Nina moved to approve April minutes with the discussed edits; Joan seconded, followed by Peter. Motion passed.

V. CHAIR’S REPORT
Scott’s Chair report was presented by Bob: guest speakers are needed for July and December meetings. Scott virtually attended the Yom HaShoah commemoration event on April 27th. Kathy Morales is the new HRC recording secretary. AAPI festival took place on May 1st. Dr. Denise Boston from the OHRE will be doing an unconscious bias training on Thursday, August 25th from 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. HRC meetings will continue to be hybrid.
VI. STUDENT REPORT

There was no student report this month.

VII. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT

Yolanda provided greetings to welcome Nina to the commission! Kathy Morales provided an introduction on herself to the commissioners. Yolanda also virtually attended the Yom HaShoah commemoration event on April 27th. La Alianza Latina workgroup in conjunction with OHRE held a meeting today (May 19th) with County Executive Ball to discuss their recommendations. AAPI Workgroup has one more meeting (last meeting is at the end of July). County Executive Ball will receive their recommendations after this meeting. The LGBTQ workgroup will also meet and provide County Executive Ball with any further recommendations. At the moment, there are three (3) open positions in the OHRE office. Yolanda thanked Nina for Inner Arbor Trust’s assistance with the AAPI Heritage Festival. Bob inquired on HCPD’s HBI reports; Yolanda will send him the reports. Yolanda discussed with Jonah the anonymous reporting form and the plans on how it will look. Yolanda also provided an update on the equity assessment and is working on concluding it. The report’s findings should be open to the public in late June. Yolanda opened the floor to questions. Questions: HBI reports? (2 in April – one is anti-LGBTQ/anti-Black and the second is anti-Asian). Joan told the group about a church in Cooksville regarding a possible HBI (the pastor called FBI based on threat).

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

• Outreach:

Kui: attended AAPI steering committee on mental health, participated in part of the violence in Buffalo webinar and HCLS Evening in the Stacks event. (Bob, Joan, Bianca, and Lynda attended Evening in the Stacks).

Jonah: is creating a presentation for the June meeting regarding the recommendation for a HBI form to be on the website.

• Awards Committee: Lynda, Bianca & Gab

Bianca mentioned having another meeting, submitted forms to Claudia and plan to make an announcement for Ball Bulletin. Nominations will open (around early June). There was a brief discussion on ways to change the form so the public can nominate more than one person. There was an outstanding question from last year on whether OHRE will need to fill out a form (which would include the EIN number). The form may be needed to get the information out to the entire school system’s contacts.

• Nominating Committee:

County Executive’s office is working on a press release. It was confirmed that the press release went out and the deadline to apply is on Sunday, May 22nd. Thus far, we’ve received three applications and those resumes will be sent to Peter.

• Legislative Committee:

Scott submitted a written legislative report to the Commissioners by email.
IX. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Social & Economic Justice:**

The committee is looking at putting together a panel on economic health and social justice. Joan reached out to a potential panelist, Liz Scott Glenn. Tiffany mentioned a potential panelist is Montgomery County’s Director of Human Rights, Mr. Jim Stowe. A date is still in the works, but it will possibly be a virtual event. Regarding the date, Yolanda mentioned that National Diversity Day is in October and the Commission may want to host the event earlier in the month and also market the award ceremony at this event.

- **Hate Bias:**

Voted to change name of committee to Hate Bias Committee name rather than Hate Crimes. The committee will continue to assist the student commissioner on her project regarding school resource officers (SRO). Next Monday, the Hate Bias Committee will meet to discuss Montgomery County’s program where victims get $2,000 when involved in hate bias incidents.

- **Education:**

Kui: Nothing to report. The committee has not met recently and no email correspondence either. Committee members Scott and Gab were absent.

X. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Announcements:**

Brief discussion on student commissioner’s goodbye plans. Yolanda mentioned OHRE spotlight on AAPI Heritage initiative for the month of May. Month of June will revolve around Pride month and Caribbean American Heritage month. Reading Human Rights will take place on May 24th at 6:30P.M. This month’s book discussion will be Cathy Park Hong’s book *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* at HCLS Miller Branch 9421 Frederick Rd Ellicott City, MD 21042.

Joan shared the Harriet Tubman Cultural Center (renovated building) will open in September and Harriet Tubman Day will take place at the new renovated building on September 17th.

**New Business:**

A question was posed regarding an out of state lawyer inquiring to represent someone. (Practicing law but not barred in the state that they are representing). Peter made a motion that the commission respond “No” to an out of state lawyer who asked whether he could represent a Howard County resident before the Human Rights Commission. Joan seconded the motion. The Motion passed.

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M. (Motion made by Peter; seconded by everyone).
Next Meeting: Thursday, June 16, 2022 at 7:00 P.M.