HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HYBRID MEETING
June 16, 2022 Minutes

Hybrid in Person and Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Physically Present: Scott Markow, Bob Ford, Gab Terrasa, Peter Hwang, Tiffany Releford, and Sahara Ukaegbu

Commissioners Virtually Present: Jonah Hornum, Kui Zhao, Bianca Chang, Nina Basu

Absent: Joan Hash and Lynda Earle-Hill

Staff Present: Yolanda Sonnier, Kathy Morales

Legal Counsel: Melissa Goldmeier

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chair Scott Markow called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

II. PUBLIC FORUM
Three members of the public virtually attended the meeting: Chloe McGeehan, Jon DiPietro, and Catrina Robinson.

III. GUEST SPEAKER: Leah Bulka from the Howard County Health Department
Leah Bulka, Suicide Prevention Coordinator from the Howard County Health Department was present virtually and gave a PowerPoint presentation on behavioral health equity. She provided an overview on inequity in behavioral health, National and Howard County statistics on suicide rates and unintentional drug poisoning, demographics, and a call to action. Her presentation also included education, training, and crisis resources.

IV. APPROVAL OF May 19, 2022 MINUTES
Peter moved to approve May Minutes, Tiffany seconds. Motion passed.

V. CHAIR’S REPORT
Scott’s message: Farewell to Sahara! (student commissioner). You will be missed. June is pride month! This weekend is Juneteenth – Columbia Association is hosting an event on Sunday, June 19th at the Columbia Lakefront from 12P.M. to 5P.M. Primary elections are on July 19th.

Encouraging commissioners to spread the word on the upcoming election: Tuesday, June 28th is the deadline to register. Tuesday, July 12th is the deadline for mail-in ballots. A guest speaker is needed for December’s meeting. Please let Kui know if you’d like to suggest someone. Scott met with Cpl. William Harris, head of the Minority Officers Group, informal affinity group which includes women. They meet monthly to discuss various issues that are affecting minority officers.
He invited someone from OHRE and HRC to attend one of their monthly meetings to provide a short training on the Howard County Human Rights Law and the process of investigating a complaint. We are waiting on the date then a commissioner will be designated to attend. As a reminder, Dr. Boston’s Unconscious Bias training event is on Thursday, August 25th. It will take place in person with a hybrid option. Attending in person is preferable since it will be interactive. Dr. Boston had asked for a volunteer for the training and Scott volunteered. Scott will not be attending July’s meeting. Jonah will need to chair next month’s hybrid meeting.

VI. STUDENT’S REPORT
Sahara’s message: Thank you!! As Student Commissioner, Sahara provided an overview on her project involving School Resource Officers (SROs). Her original project was to provide students with pamphlets regarding SROs and how students can interact with them. During her work, she realized that each SRO at each school is different based on the school’s administration. This is based on the school’s needs. With this information, she realized a pamphlet would not work out since it’s not uniform across the school system. Sahara made the following recommendations on her report:
- Introduction of the SROs role and it being properly outlined to students
- Code of conduct which outlines behaviors and punishments
- Clear instructions or an outline on when to intervene
- Collaboration between HRC and Student Committee for Equity
Sahara also suggested having a meeting with Head of Security for Howard County Public School System, Chuck Anderson.

VII. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT
Yolanda mentioned another Juneteenth event occurring on Sunday, June 19th. The Howard County Center of African American Culture is hosting a Juneteenth Celebration at Wilde Lake High School at 1:30 P.M. The 3rd, a nonprofit focused on Women of Color Entrepreneurs is hosting a Women of Color Art Display this weekend in conjunction with the Columbia Association. On Thursday, June 23rd at 6:30 P.M. there will be a AAPI Cultural Center meeting at the Bain Center. The purpose of the event is to receive input from the community regarding a AAPI Cultural Center. On Saturday, June 25th from 9 A.M. until 2 P.M., the County Executive and the Office of Human Rights and Equity will host a Community Ambassador event. The purpose of this event is to further the reach on resources and providing information to residents. Do you get the OHRE newsletter? If not, sign up! Kathy will check to see if the commissioners are on the listserv. If not, she will add their emails. OHRE is hosting two Reading Human Rights events this month. The first will take place on Thursday, June 23rd at the HCLS Miller Branch.
The book is, “On Juneteenth.” The second will take place on Tuesday, June 28th at the HCLS East Columbia Branch. The book is, “Tomorrow will be Different.” OHRE will have two virtual events to end the month of June. The first is “Pronouns and Policies: combating LGBTQIA+ discrimination in employment” on Tuesday, June 28th at noon. The second is a Facebook Live event, “We Will Never Forget Haiti” on Thursday, June 30th at noon. The LGBTQ Workgroup and La Alianza Latina Workgroup will become commissions. There will be a hearing on July 18th. If approved by County Council, it becomes effective 61 days after it’s been approved. The resolutions will be filed in September. EEOC has sent the Investigations Unit several cases. In addition, Offers have been made for the three OHRE vacancies.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Outreach:
  Kui: Nothing to report. A speaker has been designated for the July meeting. Trying to identify speaker for December’s meeting.
  Jonah: Will do his presentation on hate bias reporting form at the next meeting.

- Awards Committee:
  Gab: Committee met on June 14th. The Survey Monkey and the press release is out. Online nominations are live. The committee is working with OHRE on finalizing flyer. The deadline for nominations was August 14th on the press release but will be moved to August 31st.

- Nominating Committee:
  Peter: nine total applications for student commissioner. Interviews will begin on Monday, June 20th. Deadline for recommendation is still unknown. Nominating committee will put forth recommendation to County Executive if the deadline is before the July meeting. Motion made by Gab; Bob seconded.

- Legislative Committee:
  Scott: Sent written report to the committee. Nothing at the county or state level. At the Federal level, out of the Judiciary Committee, there’s mentions of creating a new immigration court. Right now, it’s handled by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Should be independent. The bill is pending in the House. Two bills that passed the House: Hair style discrimination (protected class for certain government programs) and Japanese Confinement Education Act (to provide educational programs).
IX. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

• Social & Economic Justice:
Tiffany: Held a meeting yesterday (June 15th). The tentative dates for the panel are October 12, 13, 27th. The panelist for the event: Elizabeth Glenn, Jim Stowe, and a person from the financial industry. Looking at Howard County State’s Attorney Rich Gibson as a potential panelist. Brainstorming panelists but want to lock in a date.

• Hate Bias:
Bob: Thanks Sahara. Looking forward to seeing her report.
Bob raised a question on reporting HBIs regarding writing an annual report. OHRE reports it to the county and county residents, but the police department reports it to the State.

• Education:
Gab: Project for the year involves doing a video for the website to educate the public on the commission. Scott created a rough outline. There’s more to come!

X. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Yolanda will investigate the Hate Bias Incident reports from Howard County Police Department. August is Black Business Month and the County Executive’s Office and OHRE are cohosting a Black Business Event on Saturday, August 13th. Yolanda spoke to a company about reviewing and changing the Procedure Manual. The commission will have to give the input, but a separate individual will be responsible for writing or revising it. Scott raised a question if OHRE plans to do any training on Immigration and Citizenship Status as a protected class? Scott will draft comments in support of both the LGBTQIA+ and La Alianza Latina commissions being created. The comments will be filed with the County Council. Motion was made by Gab in support of both commissions. Favored by all. Motion passed.

XI. CLOSED SESSION

• OHRE Charge No: 21-09-028/HRC Case #: 22-05-001 discussion
Committee went into a closed session at 8:34 P.M. A motion was made by Peter, Tiffany seconded the motion to go into a closed session.

XII. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 P.M.