



City of Virginia Beach

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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
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VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23456-9056

VIRGINIA BEACH HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION MEMBERS:

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RAJEEB ISLAM

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CITY COUNCIL LIAISONS:

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

REGINA S. HILLIARD, HR DIRECTOR

LEGAL COUNSEL:

ROD INGRAM, DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LIAISON:

TRACIE LIGUID

VIRGINIA BEACH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Thursday, April 11, 2019 – 4 p.m.

*Fire Administration Building
4817 Columbus Street*

Members Present: Sylvia Nery-Strickland (Chairwoman), Teresa Stanley, Rabbi Israel Zoberman, JoJo Orencia Jr., Luis Rivera, Allison White, Michael Berlucci, Dr. Virginia Jenkot, and Ron Taylor. Rajeeb Islam participated via phone.

Members Absent: Beatriz Amberman, Thomasine Cubine, Mary Mathena, Father James Parke, Frances Knight Thompson, Cheryl Caalim, and Nicholas DiNonno

Guests: Hillary Plate (Cultural Affairs), Joe Burnsworth (Green Run Collegiate); Chance Wilson

Staff Present: Mary Graessle (Employee Relations Manager), Rod Ingram (Deputy City Attorney), Lt. Scott Wichtendal (VBPD), Sabrina Wooten (City Council), Tracie Ligid (Liaison) and Kelly Borger (Human Resources); LaQuiche Parrot (School Board Liaison)

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes/Agenda Approval** - Chair Strickland
- II. Chairman's Report** – Strickland
- III. Committee Reports**
Oceanfront Committee – Strickland/Deputy Chief Zucaro
Logo Task Force - JoJo Orencia (merchandise to be ordered by end of April)
Mental Health Task Force- Tommie Cubine
Pastors/Leadership Liaison – Teresa Stanley
Nomination Committee – JoJo Orencia
Awards Committee – Michael Berlucci
- IV. Liaison/Staff Report and Updates**
VBHRC Inquiries
- V. Old Business**
Va. Assoc. of Human Rights membership dues & conference- Vivian Blaize
State of the City – Ginger Jenkot, Luis Rivera
Va. Center for Inclusive Communities Humanitarian Awards – Fr. Jim Parke, Blaize, Berlucci
Partnership for MOCA art opening - Strickland
- VI. New Business**
Approval for proposed future presentations:
- Green Run Collegiate, LaQuiche Parrot
- Va. Beach Cultural Affairs new season, Hillary Plate
Communication plan for urgent issues
- VII. Citizens Remarks**

I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes (March 14, 2019)

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Strickland at 4:04 p.m.

Roll was taken of the commissioners, staff and guests in attendance. The minutes from the March 14, 2019, meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Berlucchi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion. The meeting minutes from the March 14, 2019 were approved unanimously.

Commissioner Islam was unable to be physically present at the meeting and instead participated via telephone from a remote location in accordance with the Commission's Policy for Participation in Meetings by Electronic Communication Means and Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.1. He had a work commitment and called in from his work site in from EMS Administration, EMS Administration Office at 4160 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Virginia Beach.

II. New Business

- **Green Run Collegiate, LaQuiche Parrot and Joe Burnsworth**
Joe Burnsworth gave a brief 5-minute presentation on the first and only public charter school in the Hampton Roads area. Joe offered two invitations: Commissioners to visit Green Run Collegiate during an arranged visit; May 4th Gala at Zeiders American Dream Theater.
- **Virginia Beach Cultural Affairs, Hillary Plate**
Hillary Plate gave a brief 3-minute presentation on Virginia Beach Gigs Globally Inspired Gathering. Cultural Affairs is actively looking for partners for some of their upcoming events they are planning to host. Hillary would like to meet with the HRC to discuss future partnerships.
- Commission decided to ask both speakers back to speak to the HRC. Each speaker will be given a 15-minute window for a presentation with questions to follow.

III. Committee Reports

- **Oceanfront Committee – Chairwoman Strickland**
Deputy Chief Zucaro was not present, however, Lt. Scott Wichtendal and Tracie updated the Commissioners that all the Independent Observer program spots are full, and there is backup - if needed. Leadership team is still in the works. A final copy of the mission and regulations were provided in the packet, along with a new structure for team leads and shift leads. Also in the packet was a working flow-chart of who is involved.
- **Logo Task Force**
Members of the HRC Logo Committee: Commissioners Berlucchi, Islam and Strickland, chaired by Commissioner Orenca, Jr. Regina Hilliard, Human Resources Director, gave this year's remaining budget and a deadline for ordering by April 30th. Commissioner Orenca suggested ordering items with the old logo with the remaining budget. Commissioner Berlucchi would like to see the logo updated but at the appropriate time; Commissioners Stanley and Jenkot agreed. Commissioner Rivera hopes the City will show some leadership in regards to a new logo. Commissioners Strickland would like to verify the remaining budget and deadlines for purchasing, and then call a meeting for the Logo Task Force. Attorney Ingram verified with HR Director Regina Hilliard via phone that the deadline for purchasing is April 30th and that there is a couple thousand dollars left in this fiscal year's budget. Attorney Ingram also verified that if we don't use the budget this year, it will not affect next year's budget. Hilliard mentioned that if the logo cannot be locked down by April 30th, the remaining balance can be used on membership fees, items ordered without the logo, or order a small supply of items with current logo. Commissioner Strickland mentioned scheduling a Logo/Merchandise meeting prior to April 30th.
- **Mental Health Task Force**
Commissioner Cubine was absent from the meeting. The following remarks were submitted by

Commissioner Cubine prior to the meeting:

“MH Task Force Activities since last HRC meeting:

Admirals Ice Hockey Mental Health Awareness Night, March 23: We joined with other advocates in promoting MH awareness. Sharing a table with NAMI Coastal Virginia, we presented our slide show throughout the evening and communicated with fans about MH issues.

Interfaith Alliance at the Beach (IAB) Attended meeting and provided legislative update on MH bills and information on the work of the MH Task Force and upcoming MH related community events.

MH Proclamation for Mental Health Month: We talked with local MH organizations and learned that the VB Department of Human Services has a MH Proclamation in the works to be read by the mayor. Therefore we will not need to submit a proclamation.

MH Task Force Meeting was held on March 20. (See Minutes). Among other issues, we discussed what should be our focus and goals in relation to NAMI, MH Coalition, Mental Health America, etc. We agreed that our roles include collaboration with, participation in and support for the activities of these organizations. Additionally, as a part of a Human Rights Commission, we need to work to bring forth the impact of stigma and discrimination on the human rights of individuals with mental health conditions.

Plans: We will continue to: 1) work with Media & Communications to develop impactful PSAs, videos, media messages, 2) seek opportunities for distribution: eg. MH Fairs, Facebook, VBTV, etc. 3) seek venues, including outreach to faith communities and others, 4) continue to collaborate with NAMI, CIT, DHS, the MH Awareness Coalition, etc. 5) Identify experts on our subject-focus. 6) be alert to opportunities for participation”

Commissioner Jenkot represented the Mental Health Task Force. Commissioners Cubine and Jenkot had attended the Admirals Ice Hockey Mental Awareness Night on March 23rd and shared a table with NAMI. They had great conversations with people regarding mental health. Packet included a calendar of activities for May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month. Commissioner Stanley requested members wear green ribbons during the month of May. Commissioner Stanley will send Tracie an updated event sheet with links and dates to send out to the commission.

- **Pastors Leadership Liaison**

Commissioner Stanley informed the Commissioners that the Arts of Humanity Event was scheduled for Saturday, April 6th, but due to bad weather, was postponed to Saturday, April 13th.

- **Nomination Committee**

Commissioner Orecia will hold a meeting next week. Tracie will look for the form specifically for nominations to send to committee members. Commissioner Berlucchi suggested that previous nominations should be considered among new pool of applicants. Commissioner Strickland asked to organize a committee meeting soon to further discuss.

- **Awards Committee**

Due to the Convention Center’s limited availability, the Commission will need to set a date for next year’s awards Ceremony. Commissioner Berlucchi suggested September and October. Tracie called the Convention Center and suggested two available dates: Thursday, October 10th and Tuesday, December 10th (Human Rights Day). Commissioner Stanley suggested December 10th, Commissioner Berlucchi suggested October 10th. Committee agreed on October 10th for the awards ceremony since December 10th is the day City Council meets and would be a schedule conflict.

IV. Chairman’s Report – Chairwoman Strickland

- **Seatack Historical Awareness**

Chairwoman Strickland proposed sending a letter to City Council to be in support of equal recognition

of the African American historical area. Mark Reed, Historic Preservation Planner, has been asked to speak to the HRC to provide an understanding of the community and educate the HRC. Chairwoman Strickland also suggested taking a tour of Seatack.

- **Additional Information**

Commissioner Taylor: Generation P - "P" stands for "Pharrell" and what he stands for and this event will be a spinoff of Something in the Water. Event is geared to people between the ages of 14 and 26 years old to submit art in various forms that will be evaluated by professionals. Top 3 from each category will be chosen to perform at the Z.

Commissioner Taylor: Judicial system in Virginia Beach has a lack of minorities in the court system. The Human Rights body has sent a letter to the delegation earlier in the year, but they are suggesting to send another letter in addition to having one-on-one conversations with a member of the Virginia Beach delegation to voice the concerns of the HRC. Chairwoman Strickland asked Commissioner Taylor to send out a contact list of the members of the delegation in which they should call to have a conversation.

V. Liaison/Staff Reports and Updates

- **VBHRC Inquiries**

No Inquiries.

VI. Old Business

- **Virginia Association of Human Rights - Vivian Blaize**

Annual membership fee is \$25. VAHR Conference will be May 31- June 2. As soon as the program is confirmed, it will be sent to Tracie to be disseminated to everyone. Chairwoman Strickland suggested the memberships be paid for the commissioners. This will be put on next month's agenda to be discussed in more detail. Vivian is hoping to have one meeting a quarter, as opposed to one meeting a year in Richmond.

- **Report of events Commissioners attended**

- Commissioners Jenkot, Rivera and Blaize attended State of the City and Luncheon. The new city slogan was discussed: "The City of Yes."
- Virginia Inclusive Awards. Five awards were given out. Vivian will send information on the awards to Tracie to send out to the HRC.
- Virginia Beach Student showcase: Commissioners Blaize, Berlucchi and Rivera attended.
- Partnership for MOCA: Commissioners Strickland and Berlucchi attended. Commissioners Strickland met with artist Gina Adams. Quilts will be on display for a few more months.
- Race, Equity and Education Forum: Commissioner Jenkot attended. Focus was the relationship between students and teachers.
- Hampton Roads Gazette event. Commissioners Stanley and Zoberman attended.
- "Crucial Conversations:" Commissioners Stanley and Islam attended at Wesleyan College.
- Transgender Day of Visibility at Old Dominion University. Commissioners White and Jenkot attended the annual event.

VII. Citizen Remarks

- **Vivian Blaize**

Attended the naturalization ceremony of a friend. She said there were 100 new U.S. citizens from 48 countries and nearly half of them are now Virginia Beach residents. She participated in a Va. Beach Police Ride-Along. Vivian said it was very informational.

- **Hillary Plate**

Wants to create a partnership for InFaith Dialogue: Sultan and the Saint. Will be speaking with Commissioner Stanley about details.

- **Brother Kenick El of Moorish Science Temple of America**

Participated in a Va. Beach Police Ride-Along, as well, and learned what the police department does on a daily basis. He said some concerns were brought forth during a meeting with Congresswoman Elaine Luria around the enforcement of legislation that was passed last year in regards to collecting student demographics in Virginia Beach. The schools are doing third party observations in selecting what they believe the child's ethnicity or race. He said that this is a violation of parental rights, violation of human rights, and a violation of religious freedoms. These concerns were brought forth to Congresswoman Luria.

He is also concerned with having more Islamic leadership within the HRC. Chairwoman Strickland requested Brother El to send this information to the committee for them to review in more detail.

VIII. Adjournment

Chairwoman Strickland adjourned the meeting at 5:59 p.m.