



City of Virginia Beach

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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
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MUNICIPAL CENTER
BUILDING 18

2424 COURTHOUSE DRIVE
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23456-9056

VIRGINIA BEACH HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION MEMBERS:

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DR. VIRGINIA JENKOT VICE
CHAIRWOMAN

BEATRIZ AMBERMAN

JOE BURNSWORTH

DAVID CALLIOTT

THOMASINE CUBINE

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CHERYLL CAALLIM

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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, August 8, 2019 – 4 p.m.

City Municipal Center, Bldg. 19, Training Room B
2416 Courthouse Drive

Members Present: Sylvia Nery-Strickland (Chairwoman), Dr. Virginia Jenkot (Vice Chairwoman), Teresa Stanley, Rabbi Israel Zoberman, Luis Rivera, Joe Burnsworth, Beatriz Amberman, Tommie Cubine, Frances Knight-Thompson, David Calliott, Brother LaKendrick Coburn El, Carla Hessestine, Ron Taylor, and Jamal Gunn

Members Absent: Allison White, Cheryl Caalim, Nicholas DiNonno, and JoJo Orenca Jr., and Rajeeb Islam

Staff Present: Kenneth Chandler, (Deputy City Manager), Mary Graessle (Employee Relations Manager), Regina Hilliard (Director of Human Resources), Dana Harmeyer (City Attorney), Deputy Chief Tony Zucaro (VBPD), Lt. Michele "Shelly" Meister (VBPD), Lt. Lois Thompson, Dottie Holtz (School Board Liaison), Dr. LaQuiche Parrot (Education Liaison), Tracie Liguid (Liaison) and Shelley Johnson (Human Resources)

AGENDA

I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes Approval - Chair Nery-Strickland

II. Special Presentations:

YWCA South Hampton Road – President Mary Kate Andris, ED.D.

III. Chairman's/Committee/Liaison Reports:

Chairman's Report- Strickland

Committees:

Awards Committee- David Calliott

By-Laws/Policy Committee- Luis Rivera

Forums/Dialogue Committee-

Mental Health Committee- Tommie Cubine

Oceanfront Committee- Strickland/Deputy Chief Zucaro

Public Information Committee-

Task Forces:

Student Human Rights Task Force-Frances Knight-Thompson

Liaisons

City Manager's LGBTQ Work Group – Ginger Jenkot

Center for Study of Religious Freedom at Va. Wesleyan – Raj Islam, Teresa Stanley

Education – Dr. LaQuiche Parrott, Dottie Holtz

Hampton Roads Black Caucus – Ron Taylor

Hampton Roads Legislative Collaborative Table – Teresa Stanley

Legislative Liaison – Jamal Gunn

Minority Business Council – Frances Knight-Thompson

Pastors Leaders Community Police Relations – Teresa Stanley

Princess Anne County Confederate Statue Roundtable – Rabbi Zoberman

Va. Beach Vision Oceanfront Task Force – Teresa Stanley

Va. Association of Human Rights Commission – Ginger Jenkot

Va. Beach Police Department – Deputy Chief Tony Zucaro

Va. Beach Sheriff's Department – Lt. Lois Thompson

IV. Staff Report and Updates:

VBHRC Inquiries

V. Old Business

VI. New Business– Additional Legislative Items, Eid Al Adha 2019 – Raj Islam

VII. Citizens Remarks

VIII. Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Thursday, September 12, 2019 @ 4:00 p.m.

Va. Beach Economic Development. 4525 Main Street, Suite 700, Virginia Beach, VA 23462

I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes Approval

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Strickland at 4:06 p.m.

Roll call was taken of the Commissioners. Commissioners Orenca, Jr., White, Islam, Caalim and DiNonno were absent.

The minutes from July 11, 2019, meeting were reviewed. Vice Chairwoman Jenkot made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Cubine made a second motion to revise Page 2 of the minutes under the heading Mental Health Committee to state *the Mental Health Resolution being proposed by City Council Michael Berlucci was discussed at the July 2 Mental Health Committee Meeting. Members attended the City Council meeting afterwards and spoke in support of the Resolution. City Council voted in favor.* The July meeting minutes will be revised and posted to include comments submitted from Commissioner Cubine.

II. Special Presentations

a. YWCA South Hampton Roads – President Mary Kate Andris, Ed. D.

Mary Kate Andris provided an overview about the various outreach programs that the YWCA is currently involved with including SART and DART. The YWCA's mission is to provide a source of strength, courage, and empowerment for women and families facing crisis. Their programs provide quality services responding to the needs of survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence. Locally, the YWCA is involved in multiple partnerships extending from Virginia Beach to Isle of Wight. The YWCA is proposing a working relationship or collaboration with the HRC to create a forum to openly address the topic of racism. The topics would range from the very definition of racism to what is racism and how do we eliminate it from our culture. They have proposed a start date of early January/February 2020. Commissioner Amberman has agreed to partner with the YWCA and will assist in this group effort.

III. Chairman's/Committee/Liaison Reports

a. Chairman's Report- Strickland

Chairwoman Strickland and Commissioner Taylor met earlier this week with City Manager Dave Hansen to address their concerns about his remarks he made at a public meeting concerning the Floatopia event in May. In late May, the City Manager issued a public apology and provided a press release admitting that he used a *poor choice of words* and added that *there was nothing intended by the comment that he made*. Commissioner Taylor will provide a copy of the press release to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Taylor briefly addressed his fellow Commissioners for the need to have more diversity in our own Police department and he elaborated about the recent departure of Captain Kenny Miller from VBPD and to newly appointed Chief of Police for City of Petersburg, Virginia. Commissioner Taylor will reach out to minority officers within the VBPD and ask for them to "step up/forward" about diversified recruiting needs within the VBPD. Deputy Chief Tony Zucaro insisted that the Chief of Police continues to reach out on a routine basis to VBPD leadership and the entire organization about the "voice" of the rank and file and is very serious about recruiting female candidates and more diversity within the department.

Chairwoman Strickland requested assistance from the City Manager's office to secure a permanent meeting space for future HRC Meetings.

b. Awards Committee- David Calliott

The Chair entertained a motion to recess into a closed session pursuant to the exemption from open meetings allowed by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A) (10), for the following purpose:

Discussions for consideration of special awards, specifically the awards for the Annual Awards Program. The motion to enter into closed session was made by Chairwoman Strickland and seconded by Commissioner Calliott and roll call vote, Sylvia Nery-Strickland, Virginia Jenkot, Luis Rivera, MA Ed, Beatriz Amberman, Jamal Gunn, Teresa Stanley, Rabbi Israel Zoberman, Bro. Lakendrick Coburn EL G.S., D.M., Frances Knight Thompson, David Calliott, Thomasine Cubine, Ron Taylor and Joe Burnsworth.

The closed session began at 5:25 p.m.

IV. Reconvene in Open Session (5:40)

Immediately after the closed session, the HRC reconvened into an open session, and a roll call vote was held to certify the closed session. The certification provided that, to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification applies; and (ii) only such matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. A roll call vote was held, and the following commissioners voted in favor of certification Sylvia Nery-Strickland, Virginia Jenkot, Luis Rivera, MA Ed, Beatriz Amberman, Jamal Gunn, Teresa Stanley, Rabbi Israel Zoberman, Bro. Lakendrick Coburn EL G.S., D.M., Frances Knight Thompson, David Calliott, Thomasine Cubine, Ron Taylor and Joe Burnsworth. No member voted against certification or abstained.

Commissioner Rivera made a motion to accept the slate of honorees as proposed by the VBHRC Awards committee, Commissioner Amberman seconded, the slate was approved unanimously.

The HRC Awards Committee will hold a meeting this Wednesday, August 14 at 4:00 in Building 18 - Human Resources Conference Room #125.

a. By-Laws/Policy Committee- Luis Rivera

No new information to report. Commissioners will finalize the draft of the by-Laws to be voted on at the September meeting.

b. Forums/Dialogue – Chairman Amberman has agreed to chair this committee.

c. Mental Health Committee- Tommie Cubine

Copy of the July 2 meeting minutes have been provided to members of the HRC. The Mental Health Committee recently met on August 6. During the meeting the attendees were asked to identify top 3 or more comprehensive services that the State of Virginia has to offer. Virginia is behind other states in what comprehensive services are offered to those in need. Councilman Berlucchi will present a Resolution on July 2 to City Council requesting the General Assembly provide more funding for mental health. A Mental Health Forum is scheduled for December 10. Additional information will be provided.

d. Oceanfront Committee- Strickland/Deputy Chief Zucaro

Brian Solis and members of the VBPD recently met with members from the Oceanfront Committee to provide an informative presentation regarding lessons learned and statistics gained from this year's first *Something in the Water* event. The presentation identified areas of improvement, arrest data, and they recognized the working relationship between the community and the Independent Observer programs.

- e. Public Information Committee
No information discussed.

- f. Student Human Rights Task Force
Commissioner Knight-Thompson recently met with Commissioner Burnsworth and Dr. LaQuiche Parrott to explore what is needed to create a Student Human Rights Commission in Virginia Beach. The City of Fairfax, Virginia has exchanged information with the Task Force about the creation of their own Student Human Rights Commission. The Task Force will need to identify and determine what are the expectations/purpose and mission of the newly created commission and determine what certain criteria is needed to move forward. The criteria ranges from how will a student be selected to participate, frequency of the meetings to does an official need to approval the need for such commission. The Task Force will continue to meet with HRC for guidance and clarity. The task force is scheduled to meet in September and Commissioner Knight-Thompson will provide meeting dates/time.

- g. Liaisons Report
Pastor's Leaders program asked to be included in future calls for Independent Observers.
Oceanfront Task Force met with Vision 2040 on July 24.
Southampton Roads Collaborative Table has a meeting scheduled on September 29.

V. Staff Report and Updates

Annual Report

Annual Report / Power Point presentation will be presented to members of City Council on Tuesday, August 27.

VI. Old Business

None.

VII. New Business

HRC Retreat/Work Plan 2020

Chairwoman Strickland would like to begin working on the next HRC Retreat. Dates/times and location have not been determined. The Commissioners are being asked to identify what is the most important work for the HRC in 2020?

General Assembly Legislative Items

- A. Protection of Youth from Conversion Therapy Sponsored by City Council Member Michael Berlucchi.

City Council Member Michael Berlucchi is asking for support from the HRC on this item. Paperwork submitted by Council Member Berlucchi describes conversion therapy, sometimes known as reparative therapy, as a harmful practice of attempting to change one's sexual orientation or gender identity. This philosophy is based on discredited and outdated theories. In Virginia, it is currently legal to promote and engage in this dangerous technique, which is especially harmful to youth, who often have no choice when this treatment is forced upon them by a parent or guardian. Currently, this practice has been banned in 16 states.

Vice Chairwoman Jenkot made a motion to approve and show support behind this item moving forward to the General Assembly. Commissioners Taylor and Rivera seconded the motion but are concerned about how the item will be worded in the 2020 packet. Commissioner Rivera suggested, in order for the HRC to fully support this item, City Council Member Berlucchi be invited to the September HRC meeting. The meeting would allow him to provide some clarification and address questions or concerns surrounding the item. A motion was made to withdrawal this item and add the item to the September agenda. All Commissioners were in favor of this motion. Commissioner Gunn abstained.

VIII. Citizens Remarks

None.

IX. Adjournment

Chairwoman Strickland adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.