

Members Present: Sylvia Nery-Strickland (Chair), Virginia Jenkot (Vice Chair), Beatriz Amberman, Joe Burnsworth, David Calliott, Thomasine Cubine, Heidi Daniels, Jamal Gunn, Carla Hesselstine, Niam Lagoe, Emiliano “Jojo” Orenca, Luis Rivera, Teresa Stanley, Mark Stevens, Ron Taylor, Frances Knight Thompson, Allison White

Staff Present: Regina Hilliard (Human Resources), Shelley Johnson (Human Resources), Dominique McKinnon (HRC Liaison)

Liaisons Present: Deputy Chief William T. Dean, Jennifer Franklin (School Board Liaison), Rod Ingram (Deputy City Attorney), Dr. LaQuiche Parrott, Lt. Lois Thompson

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nery-Strickland at 4:05 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call of the Commissioners was taken. Commissioner Calliott and Commissioner Hesselstine participated in the meeting remotely from their homes for medical reasons. Commissioner Taylor participated in the meeting remotely from his home for the personal reason of work commitment. Commissioner Liu and Commissioner Zoberman were absent.

III. Minutes Approval

Commissioner Stevens made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 10th meeting. Commissioner Daniels seconded the motion. The minutes from the November 10th meeting were approved by a vote of 14-0.

IV. Commissioners’ Farewell

Chair Nery-Strickland reported that the terms for four commissioners will be expiring at the end of March. Vice Chair Jenkot read a letter of appreciation to each of the outgoing commissioners. Commissioners Rivera, Stanley, Cubine and Calliott each took a moment to speak about their time on the Commission and thank their fellow commissioners. Staff Liaison McKinnon handed out goody bags to all the outgoing commissioners.

V. Chairman’s Report

Chair Nery-Strickland stated that the FY22 Work Plan was sent to the commissioners for review and asked for a motion to adopt the FY22 Work Plan. Commissioner Amberman made a motion to adopt the FY22 Work Plan. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion. The FY22 Work Plan was adopted by a vote of 16-0.

Chair Nery-Strickland reported that Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond has proposed a Juneteenth Art Show. Staff Liaison McKinnon reached out to Dr. Ross-Hammond to get some information about the art show and Dr. Ross-Hammond would like to make a presentation to the HRC in April. Chair Nery-Strickland asked the Commission if they were in approval of a presentation regarding the art show and there was consensus for a presentation from Dr. Ross-Hammond during the April meeting.

Chair Nery-Strickland reported on the jail tour that Vice Chair Jenkot and Commissioner Stevens attended. Vice Chair Jenkot provided the commissioners with a report on the jail tour. She stated that there is opportunity for the Mental Health Committee to follow up with the mental health services that are provided

by the jail because not all inmates have access to the services. Commissioner Stevens reported that limited staff is one of the issues with getting access to the inmates. Chair Nery-Strickland stated that Lt. Thompson has informed her that there will be other opportunities to take a jail tour in the future.

Chair Nery-Strickland stated that during the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the 2nd Precinct last night, Channel 3 News was there and interviewed Commissioner Stevens. Commissioner Stevens reported that during the meeting people asked questions about the shootings at the Oceanfront last March. He provided them with the contact information for the HRC in case anyone wanted to come to the Commission to discuss the issues. Commissioner Stevens added that attending the CAC meetings is a good way to connect with the community and learn about all the city services. Chair Nery-Strickland asked that commissioners volunteer to attend CAC meetings in the future and to contact Staff Liaison McKinnon who can connect them with the CAC leaders.

Chair Nery-Strickland reported that the Independent Observer Program (IOP) was in an observe at-will status during COVID for the past two years. College Beach Weekend is coming in April. Deputy Chief Dean stated that details about College Beach Weekend are being tracked on social media for the 3rd week of April. Chair Nery-Strickland stated that she and Commissioner Hesseltine will work on getting the IOP members together to discuss.

VI. Committee/Liaison Reports

Staff Liaison McKinnon gave the Commission an update on the planning for the Awards Ceremony:

The program will be on May 11th at MOCA with the ceremony scheduled from 6:30-7:30pm and the reception from 7:30-8:30pm.

The program will go as follows:

- The entrance of the Color Guard – Commissioner Burnsworth connected Staff Liaison McKinnon with the ROTC staff
- Welcome and Introduction of the Keynote Speaker
- Remarks from the Keynote Speaker
- History of the Awards Ceremony and the VBHRC including recognition of commissioners, liaison, and staff – Councilman Berlucchi and Chair Nery-Strickland
- Recognition of Honorees
- Closing with a prayer – Rabbi Zoberman

Staff Liaison McKinnon stated that she is waiting for the rental contract with MOCA to be finalized for review by the City Attorney. Once the contract has been finalized, invitations to the honorees and guests, and the public notice will be distributed.

Staff Liaison McKinnon reported that she provided the commissioners with samples of the items for the HRC marketing toolkit – brochures and pens. The wristbands to be included in the toolkit have not arrived yet. Staff Liaison McKinnon will coordinate with the commissioners for times when they can pick up their toolkits for meetings and events that they attend to spread the word about the HRC.

Commissioner Burnsworth reported that the By-laws Committee reviewed the by-laws and gave an overview of the recommended changes. He stated that the Commission will receive a copy of the recommended changes two weeks prior to the April meeting for a vote. He added that the committee also reviewed the process for handling public concerns and added the suggested comments from the November meeting regarding feedback from citizen inquiries. Those additions will be provided to the Commission as well for the

April meeting. Staff Liaison McKinnon reported that she has already been implementing the suggested process for following up with citizen inquiries. She stated that if the referral agency for the citizen is an outside state or federal agency, she will tell the citizen to call her back if they haven't heard from the agency in two business days. If the referral agency is a City department, she follows up with that department to make sure that they have reached out to the citizen.

Commissioner Rivera asked about the status of the City establishing rules and regulations for all boards and commissions. City Attorney Rod Ingram reported he and Chair Nery-Strickland have been part of the Citizen Committee on Boards and Commissions and he anticipates the committee having recommendations to present to the City Council next month. If adopted, he and Chair Nery-Strickland will inform the HRC.

Commissioner Amberman reported that the Forums/Dialogue committee discussed if they were going to proceed with the forum that was organized in 2020 or organize a new forum with a different format. The Commission was provided with a copy of the minutes from the Forums/Dialogue meeting on March 3rd. The committee recommended having an inspirational speaker, and inviting organizations to provide resource tables and have conversations with the public. She asked the commissioners for any feedback on what format the forum should take and suggestions for organizations that should participate. She invited all commissioners to attend the next Forums/Dialogue Committee meeting or send their suggestion via email to help shape the forum.

Commissioner Cubine provided the Commission with a copy of the Mental Health Committee report and stated that the committee has been focusing on funding for STEP-VA, permanent supportive housing, and mental health outreach to faith communities.

- The General Assembly finance committee is still negotiating on the budget - the House has recommended \$28.3 million dollars to fund STEP-VA and the Senate has recommended \$50.5 million dollars.
- Permanent support housing – in February the Housing and Neighborhood Preservation department, along with NAMI, made a recommendation to City Council for a 60-unit apartment complex with units designated for people with mental health conditions. The complex would include space for NAMI Coastal Virginia to provide services to residents. She shared that Councilman Berlucchi and Councilman Holcomb were very supportive of this recommendation during the meeting. Commissioner Stanley shared that Councilman Moss has also been supportive.
- Interfaith Alliance at the Beach (IAB) accepted the proposal from Mental Health Committee to encourage faith leaders to be more involved with mental health and they started a subcommittee. The IAB will be holding a luncheon to discussion mental health with faith leaders in May.

Commissioner Cubine reported that she and Vice Chair Jenkot will be attending the Mental Health Awareness Night with the Admirals on March 19th. Se announced that Vice Chair Jenkot will be taking over the role of Committee Chair for the Mental Health Committee.

Commissioner Stanley reported that the Season for Nonviolence Collective has been working with community groups such as ViBe District and StandUp for Kids on mental health issues with students serving as mental health ambassadors in their school and painting inspirational rocks. They will have a closing event on April 4th at 5 pm, in the parklet at 21st Street and Cypress Avenue. She thanked Dr. Parrott for her work and VBCPS's work with supporting this event.

Dr. LaQuiche Parrott gave an update on the Educational Equity work of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS). The equity assessment was completed in November 2021 and one of the key findings was

getting more voices from the community around the work of equity. At the end of January, they started listening sessions within the school community on how to continue to advance equity education in Virginia Beach schools -19 were completed and there are 14 more to go. Dr. Parrott provided the Commission with information about a feedback forum that was launched on VBSchools.com to get input from more stakeholders in the community on how to advance equity in Virginia Beach schools, their experience with inequity in Virginia Beach schools and if they support the educational equity work. The forum will close on March 20th and the input will be useful in drafting the Educational Equity plan. She asked that commissioners participate in the forum and share with their network. She also shared that VBCPS is hiring and will be hosting a virtual job fair on March 30th or April 4th from 5-7pm. She shared a link and information cards for the job fair, and asked that the commissioners share the information with people they know who may be seeking employment.

Commissioner Hesseltine reported that the first week of October is Senior Malnutrition Awareness Week and she would like the HRC to help shed light on food insecurity issues in the Commonwealth. She asked if there were any updates on the Citizen Review Board (CRB). City Attorney Rod Ingram reported that the VBPD is developing customized training for CRB members and City Council is working on revising the Talent Bank application to include certain questions.

VII. Adjournment

Chair Nery-Strickland adjourned the meeting at 6:13 pm.

Next Meeting:
April 14th @ 4pm