



City of Virginia Beach

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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
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VIRGINIA BEACH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS:

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LEGAL COUNSEL:

ROD INGRAM, DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LIAISON:

VIRGINIA BEACH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Thursday, January 10, 2019 – 4:00 p.m.

Kempsville Recreation Center-Kempsville Room

Members Present: Rajeeb Islam (Chair), Sylvia Nery-Strickland (Vice-Chair), Beatriz Amberman, Michael Berlucchi, Vivian Blaize, Cheryll Caalim, Thomasine Cubine, Nicholas Dinonno, Father James Parke, Mary Mathena, Luis Rivera, Frances Knight Thompson, Cliff Rice, Teresa Stanley, Ron Taylor, and Rabbi Israel Zoberman,

Members Absent: Dr. Virginia Jenkot and JoJo Orencia Jr.

Guests: Alison White, Brittany Dunn (Safe House), Bruce Smith

Staff Present: Regina Hilliard (Executive Director), Ron Ingram (Deputy City Attorney), Deputy Chief Tony Zucaro (VBPd), Lt. Lois Thompson (Sheriff's Office) and Shelley Johnson (Human Resources)

AGENDA

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|--|------------------------|
| I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes (December 2018) | Chairman Islam |
| II. Disparity Study - Update | Bruce Smith |
| III. Safe House Project | Brittany Dunn |
| IV. Homeless Memorial Vigil Recap | Commissioner Stanley |
| V. Citizen Comment | Chairman Islam |
| VI. Continuing Work of VBHRC | |
| • Summit Against Hate | Commissioner Stanley |
| • Municipality Equality Index | Commissioner Berlucchi |
| • Visit to the National Museum of African American History & Culture (Update) | Commissioner Berlucchi |
| • Mental Health Task Force | Commissioner Stanley |
| • Bullying Committee | Commissioner Berlucchi |
| | Commissioner Cubine |
| | Commissioner Islam |
| VII. Commissioner & Staff Remarks * provided in writing | All |
| VIII. Adjournment | Chairman Islam |

HRC Inquiries:

<u>#'s</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Referral:</u>
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I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes (December 8, 2018)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Islam at 4:08 p.m.

Roll was taken of the Commissioners, staff and guests in attendance. The minutes from the December meeting were reviewed; Commissioner Berlucchi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Commissioner Amberman seconded the motion. The meeting minutes from December 13, 2018 were approved unanimously.

II. Citizen Comments

Bruce Smith thanked the Commissioners for their continued dialog within the City and the business community and the local populace regarding the racial disparity and the request for a disparity study in Virginia Beach. Because of their efforts and their continued support, the City of Virginia Beach contracted the firm BBC Research & Consulting, a firm specializing in conducting disparity studies that assess how minority, women and veteran owned businesses are faring in the local marketplace, to analyze the City's contracting and procurement.

Unfortunately, many personal friendships and business relationships were damaged during this process but in the end BBC Research & Consulting identified areas in need of improvement and is working to optimize the overall process and procedures for the City.

Lastly, he believes the city is under performing and must strive to be a leader in the Hampton Roads region and believes Hampton Roads is doing a great job by continuing to identify issues and having their voices heard.

III. Safe House (Brittany Dunn)

Chief Development Officer, Brittany Dunn provided an overview of the Safe House Project. The Safe House is dedicated to raising awareness of sex trafficking and providing rescue, restoration, and reintegration for American child sex trafficking victims. Safe House Project partners with existing safe houses around the United States that provide rescue, medical care, therapy, education, counseling, and many more services to child sex trafficking victims ages 10-17. Safe House Project acts as a central source of funding, so that our partners can focus on their mission of victim care. This ensures that they have the necessary financial support to continue their work and be sustainable organization within their community.

Additionally, the Safe House Project has a partnership with an organization bringing over ten (10) years of experience in survivor care to develop a NEW network of safe houses throughout the U.S. beginning with 5 new emergent care homes in the Carolinas during 2019. This network will focus on providing the first 90 days of emergent care to child victims and provide stabilization for their next phase in a long-term restorative home. Their projected goal is to discuss corporate partnering or provide sponsorship opportunities to provide funding to a network of 16 US safe houses supported through their 2019 efforts. Locally, the Safe House Project is considering developing a safe house in the Hampton Roads area.

Commissioner Stanley suggested the HRC begin networking with the Safe House Project and proposed bringing the group in to our system.

IV. Homeless Memorial Vigil Recap

On December 11, the City held its annual Homeless Memorial Vigil at the Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center on Witchduck Road. The event is in observance of National Homeless Person's Memorial Day scheduled for December 21. Mayor Dyer was in attendance. The event is held to show solidarity with those living on the streets.

Commissioner Stanley reminded everyone that the Housing Resource Center put Hampton Roads on the map unfortunately due to various situations the center has not been able to establish a permanent home for the memorial rocks they have collected.

V. Citizen Comments

None at this time were presented.

VI. Continuing Work of the VBHRC

- **Summit Against Hate**

Commissioner Stanley invited everyone out to the event and reminded everyone that they must step-up and continue to stand in solidarity.

- **Municipal Equality Index**

Commissioners Berlucchi and Chairwoman Nery-Strickland recently met with the City Manager and the Deputy City Manager to discuss the importance of the Municipal Equality Index and spoke about the importance of raising the city's score.

Commissioner Berlucchi provided the Commissioners with an overview of what the Municipal Equality Index is and the purpose of this index. The index examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies and services are of LGBTQ people who live and work there. Cities are related bases on non-discrimination laws, the municipality as an employer, municipal services, law enforcement and the city's leadership public position on equality. The good news is Virginia Beach scored the highest in the region, 50 out of 100, which is an improvement but the City of Norfolk is making significant changes and we don't want them to "leap frog" us. The city with the most significant increase was the City of Richmond. Their score increased from 40 to 90.

To learn more about the Municipal Equality Index Commissioner Berlucchi will share the link with the Commissioners.

- **Visit to the National Museum of African American History & Culture (Update)**

Commissioner Berlucchi provided an update about the planned visit to the National Museum of African American History & Culture scheduled for Friday, February 22, 2019 – departing at 6:30 a.m. Attendees will meet at the Central Library located at 4100 Virginia Beach Boulevard in Virginia Beach, VA.

Deputy City Attorney Ingram reminded the Commissioners because of the government shutdown this event is subject to change or be cancelled.

- **Mental Health Task Force**

Commissioner Cubine has provided comments in writing. Commissioner Cubine has been working closely with the STEP VA Program on legislative agenda items and would like to present to City Council in 2019. She noted that the Department of Justice noted in their report that there were several violations of the American Disability Act including failed Medicare practices and holding over 70 people in solitary confinement. The Mental Health Task Force is working closely with several entities to identify and correct these injustices.

- **Bullying Committee**

Commissioner Knight-Thompson made a motion to change the name of this committee from the Bullying Committee to a name that identifies with the objective of the committee. The new name proposed was the Bullying Prevention Committee. The name change was approved unanimously.

Chairman Islam and Commissioner Knight-Thompson have met with the Virginia Beach City Public Schools Board liaisons to address the need for an advisory relationship/committee to identify multiple levels of bullying towards both juveniles and adults. This committee will create the perfect conduit between both the city and schools to identify their mission and how each can work within their communities and one another. The scope of this committee will extend from where bullying may occur and will include both schools and/or workplace locations.

- **Pastors / Leaders Table**

Commissioner Stanley will be leaving the HRC meeting early tonight in order to attend the Pastors / Leaders Table Meeting scheduled tonight.

VII. Commissioner and Staff Remarks

- Chief Tony Zucaro reminded everyone that Virginia Beach Police Department is scheduled to meet with the Department of Strategic Growth Office to open the dialogue about upcoming events including the "Something is in the Water". This is the first joint meeting scheduled this year. There are numerous challenges ahead for the team but they will be working closely together to get ahead of this program. Points of Contact will be both Lieutenants Zelms and Wichtendahl.

Vice Chairwoman Nery-Strickland and fellow committee members are expected to meet next week to begin reviewing submissions for the upcoming award ceremony. The review process is limited to a smaller group of people to review applications more effectively. The deadline for submissions is February 1. The most notable change to the overall ceremony will be there will be no Master of Ceremony at this year's event. Vice Chairman Nery-Strickland has chosen will direct and organize the event.

Vice Chairwoman Nery-Strickland and others are working with members from the Media & Communications Group to update the current HRC logo. The committee will select their top 3 choices and will then submit them to the HRC to review and select the most favored one.

- Chairman Islam would like to take a moment and wish the best of luck to Kathy Hinson in her new position with the Mayor's office. Because the HRC Liaison position is now vacant, Chairman Islam will be working closely with members of Human Resources\Employee Relations Division (Stacy Hawks) to maintain the standard of work processes for the HRC. He will speak to Stacy each week to discuss matters involving the HRC or the events scheduled for the commission. To avoid any and all confusion the commissioners are being asked to contact either Chairman Islam or Vice Chairwoman Nery-Strickland with their concerns and they will contact Stacy directly. In addition, the Commissioners can send all inquiries to the HRC@vb.gov mailbox for immediate attention.
- Commissioner Rivera will be traveling to Puerto Rico beginning Monday, January 14.
- Commissioner Taylor asked the Commissioners to save the date (April 21-27) for an event called Generation P (as in Pharrell Williams). The event will be held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center and will be aligned with the "Something is in the Water" celebration. The grass roots event will host participants from middle school to the age of 25 to participate. Commissioner Taylor has been asked to forward all pertinent information to the HRC@vb.gov mailbox.
- Commissioner Parke will host a jubilee in his for 53 years of Priesthood. The event will be held at the Altmeyer Funeral Homes at 5033 Rouse Drive in Virginia Beach.
- Commissioner Mathena will be attending the 2019 Disabilities Awards Ceremony at the Williams Farm Recreation Center held on February 21. Mayor Dyer will be in attendance.

- Rabbi Zoberman will be traveling to Israel on February 11. He will celebrate his Mother's birthday.
- Commissioner Amberman will be attending the 2019 Virginia Immigrant/Latino Advocacy event on January 17 in Richmond, VA.
- Deputy City Attorney Ingram announced the passing of Harry Diezel, the former City Council Member and Fire Chief for Virginia Beach.
- Deputy City Attorney Ingram asked for the Commissioner to keep Judge Robert Hagans in their thoughts and prayers. Judge Hagans was in a serious car accident and has been hospitalized.
- Commissioner Blaize wished everyone a Happy New Year and wished for everyone to accomplish all of their goals moving in to the New Year.

VIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Berlucchi made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Blaize seconded; meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.