



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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REGINA S. HILLIARD, HR DIRECTOR

LEGAL COUNSEL:

ROD INGRAM, DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LIAISON:

VIRGINIA BEACH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Thursday, February 14, 2019 – 4:00 p.m.

Fire Administration Building – 2nd Floor

Members Present: Rajeeb Islam (Chairman), Sylvia Nery-Strickland (Vice-Chairwoman), Teresa Stanley, Rabbi Israel Zoberman, JoJo Orenca Jr., Nicholas Dinonno, Ron Taylor, Thomasine Cubine, Luis Rivera, Father James Parke, Allison White, Vivian Blaize, Frances Knight Thompson, Michael Berlucchi, Dr. Virginia Jenkot and Beatriz Amberman (via phone)

Members Absent: Cheryl Caalim, Mary Mathena, Cliff Rice

Guests: Alison Byrne (MOCA), Lt. James Gordon (VBPD-Operations Division)

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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| <p>I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes (January 2019)</p> <p>II. Special Presentations</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">MOCA Partnership</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Crisis Intervention Team (Update)</p> <p>III. Chairman's Report</p> <p>IV. Continuing Work of VBHRC</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Anti-Bullying Committee</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Awards Committee</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Visit to the National Museum of African American History & Culture (Update)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Logo Committee</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Mental Health Task Force</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Oceanfront Committee</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Pastors / Leadership Table</p> <p>V. Citizen Remarks</p> <p>VI. Old Business/New Business</p> <p>VII. Commissioner & Staff Remarks * provided in writing</p> <p>VIII. Adjournment</p> | <p>Chairman Islam</p> <p>Commissioner White</p> <p>Director of Exhibitions & Education,
Alison Byrne</p> <p>VBPD – Operations Division,
Lt. James Gordon</p> <p>Chairman Islam</p> <p>Commissioner Knight Thompson</p> <p>Commissioner Berlucchi</p> <p>Commissioner Berlucchi</p> <p>Commissioner Orenca</p> <p>Commissioner Cubine</p> <p>Vice-Chairwoman Nery-Strickland</p> <p>Commissioner Stanley</p> <p>All Commissioners</p> <p>Chairman Islam</p> <p>All Commissioners</p> <p>Chairman Islam</p> |
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HRC Inquiries:

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I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Minutes (January 10, 2019)

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 January meeting were reviewed; Commissioner Berlucchi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Commissioner Blaize seconded the motion. The meeting minutes from January 10, 2019 were approved unanimously.

Welcome to HRC/ Commissioner Introduction

Commissioner White expressed her thanks to both her fellow Commissioners and City Council for being appointed to the Human Rights Commission.

She provided a brief introduction to her fellow Commissioners. In 2018, she ran for one of the two open at-large council seats. She holds a law degree from University of Akron in Ohio and earned a master's in education from Old Dominion University. Commissioner White has taught social studies at King's Fork High School in Suffolk over 15 years.

II. Special Presentation – MOCA Director of Exhibitions & Education, Alison Byrne

Alison Byrne, the Director of Exhibitions & Education from Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) reached out to Vice-Chairwoman Nery-Strickland about creating a community partnership between MOCA and the HRC*. Beginning on Saturday, March 23, the museum will provide afterhours tours beginning with the exhibition entitled *The Rest of History*. A private unveiling will be held on Friday, March 22 at 6:30 p.m. The display will be open to the public on Saturday, March 23.

The Rest of History will provide 5 different untold stories highlighting historical figures and key moments in history. The art will range from multiple media including painting, photography, sculpture, video quilts and ceramics. The artists chosen for this event are all new and unique. Each artist challenges complex social, political and personal histories. They invite viewers to join a larger conversation about pertinent issues we face in our contemporary world.

* The Commissioners agreed that this partnership doesn't need a formal vote and therefore no additional action is required from the Commission.

III. Crisis Intervention Team Update – Lt. James Gordon, VBPD Operations Division

Lt James Gordon from the City of Virginia Beach Police Department, Operations Division was invited to the February HRC meeting to provide an update on the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT).

In 1988, the City of Memphis developed the first CIT. CITs have been implemented in hundreds of other communities across the country.

According to their website, the CIT is a community partnership that allows individuals with mental illness to be redirected from the Judicial System to the Health Care System. CITs are designed to reduce negative interactions between individuals with serious mental illness and law enforcement officers, including incidents of violence, and to divert individuals from punitive incarceration to appropriate medical treatment. The partnerships are formed through the collaboration of mental health providers, law enforcement agencies, family members of individuals with mental illnesses and the individuals themselves. One of the goals of the partnership is to provide crisis training to law enforcement officers with the goal of increasing safety and accessing mental health services during a crisis response.

There are roughly over 400 officers in the department that have received some type of CIT training. A condensed version of CIT training is provided to all recent academy graduates and dispatchers. Currently, there are four statewide CIT training sessions scheduled in 2019. Registration is still being accepted but two of these sessions are completely full. Because this intense training may not agree with all personality types the CIT40 is not mandatory but is required for both members of the SWAT Team and Hostage Negotiators.

The peak hours for the CIT are 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. – Monday thru Friday. Saturday and Sunday are slower days. Based on recent statistics provided by the VBPD, use of force incidents have steadily declined in areas that deploy a CIT to the situation. The main goal for this training is to allow members from both law enforcement and EMS to work together to better assess the situation and predetermine what type of intervention is needed during this critical time. EMS teams can speed up the process by completing the medical screening, medical assessment and provide medical clearance while in the field. This partnership will allow EMS to predetermine medical eligibility for direct transport to a CIT assessment center or manage patient care while in transit to the nearest emergency room.

Deputy Chief Zucaro has agreed to provide the HRC with an overview of Chief Cervera's PowerPoint presentation that was presented to members of City Council earlier this year. Chairman Islam has requested that a copy of the presentation be sent to the HRC@vb.gov mailbox so it may be included in next month's meeting agenda.

IV. Chairman's Report

Chairman Islam recently attended the 12th Annual African-American Male Summit event. The event was held on Saturday, January 26, 2019 between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at Green Run High School. The event was open to both VBCPS students in Grade 5 at selected elementary schools and all VBCPS middle and high school students. Dr. Charles Corprew, III a 1989 graduate of Green Run High School was the keynote speaker. Councilwoman Sabrina Wooten and Mayor Dyer were in attendance.

V. Citizen Comments

None at this time were presented.

VI. Continuing Work of the VBHRC

- **Anti-Bullying Committee**

Commissioner Knight Thompson stated that the committee has not been able to meet and therefore she was not able to provide a status report on this committee.

- **Awards Committee**

Commissioner Berlucchi proposed postponing the 25th Annual Human Rights Awards Ceremony scheduled for April 4, 2019 to a later date in 2019. Commissioner Berlucchi and his fellow committee members concluded that although this decision was not an easy decision to make they feel that it would be in the best interest of the HRC to postpone this event until some matters are resolved.

Commissioner Berlucchi outlined three reasons on how the committee came to this decision. The first reason is based on the amount of incomplete nominations submitted to the committee (4 out of 8 submissions were not complete and did not have all of the requested materials. Based on the award criteria and/or guidelines the nomination should not be moved forward for further review). The second reason for this decision Commissioner Berlucchi stated is "*that he is not comfortable with the method on how the committee chose to move one nomination forward*". Lastly, Commissioner Berlucchi stated that the third and most important reason is that he could not serve as the chair of this committee based on the current legal matters against the Chairman of HRC.

Chairman Islam emphasized to his fellow Commissioners that his pending legal matters are private and will remain so and will not be further discussed at tonight's meeting. The matter will remain private and will be heard in court on Thursday, February 28. Chairman Islam stated that "depending on the outcome of this matter – he will either submit his resignation or continue his term as the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee".

Commissioner Rivera made a motion to postpone the awards ceremony until later in 2019. Commissioner Blaize seconded this motion. All Commissioners were in favor of this decision with the exception of Commission Taylor who abstained from the vote and Chairperson Islam who elected abstention.

Regina Hilliard will discuss this matter further with both the staff of Human Resources (Employee Relations) and the Budget/Finance Manager who has the authority to encumber funds for later use. Regina will request that the funds that are designated for this ceremony be moved to the next fiscal year. Based on the terms of the agreement between Human Resources and the Virginia Beach Convention Center the event will be formally cancelled. The deadline for cancellation is before incurring costs is on/or before February 28.

Commissioner Berlucchi and his fellow committee members will reconvene at a later date and time and they will contact those who have submitted a nomination and notify them of pending changes to the schedule including new dates and times. Further details will follow.

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

Commissioner Berlucchi summarized the final details about the visit to the National Museum of African American History & Culture. John Franklin, a curator with the museum will provide a private tour of the facility. The event is scheduled for Friday, February 22. Members who will be attending this event are asked to arrive at 6:30 a.m. and park on the boulevard side of the Meyera E. Oberndorf Central Library parking lot. The library is located at 4100 Virginia Beach Boulevard in Virginia Beach. Members from both Virginia Beach Public Schools and members of the Human Rights Commission will be in attendance.

- **Logo Committee**

Commissioner Orenca stated that the meeting scheduled this week had been cancelled because two members of the committee had other commitments and could not attend.

- **Mental Health Task Force**

Commissioner Cubine and the Mental Health Task Force continue to advocate for full funding for STEP VA legislation (Systems Transformation for Excellence in Performance). They have made two trips to the general assembly during the last month speaking on behalf of this program which will provide a comprehensive range of much needed community mental health services when fully funded; mandated to be in place throughout Virginia by 2021.

Commissioner Cubine and the Task Force have been working closely with Valerie Myers, a coordinator with the City of Virginia Beach Department of Media and Communications in developing and producing a public service announcement to help eliminate the stigma associated with mental health conditions and the discrimination that ensues.

Commissioner Cubine invited all Commissioners to attend a Mental Health Awareness event hosted by the Norfolk Admirals. The event will be held on Saturday, March 23 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Norfolk Scope Arena.

Commissioner Cubine announced that the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is now partnering with members of Coastal Virginia. The new partnership will now be referred to as NAMI Coastal Virginia.

- **Oceanfront Committee (Observer Program)**

Deputy Chief Zucaro has asked the HRC Commissioners to lend their support and provide assistance to the Independent Observer Program. The program engages both public and private sectors to work together in providing a favorable experience that is solidly coordinated with all participants. The dates are April 26-28 which coincides with the Pharrell Williams' event "Something in the Water" celebration. A list of the headliners will be announced later this month. The VBPD is anticipating over 25 to 35 thousand people to be in attendance for the event and the areas involved will be centered around the Virginia Beach Convention Center and include stage areas on or around 5th Street, 9th Street, and 17th Street. Deputy Chief Zucaro will provide monthly updates to the Commissioners regarding the program as details are being confirmed.

- **Pastors / Leaders Table**

No other comments, other than those provided in writing.

VII. Commissioner and Staff Remarks

- Commissioner Stanley asked the Commissioners to remember the students involved with the Parkland shooting last year in Florida. Today, February 14 is the first anniversary of the shooting. Commissioner Stanley also announced that a permanent mural will be created on the wall of the Virginia Beach Little Theater. She would also like to invite all of the Commissioners to the closing event scheduled for the Art of Humanity: In Honor of the Season for Non-Violence on Saturday, April 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Lastly, Commissioner Stanley would like to give kudos to Lt. Lois Thompson for her never ending support and to those who attended the Stand Against Hate event. Over 300 people were in attendance for the event.
- Student Commissioner DiNonno would like to remind everyone that his school was doing Season for Nonviolence activities during Spirit Week this month. One of the examples of what they will be doing is to provide daily trivia questions about the nonviolence. He has asked that HRC Commissioners to support the event again this year.
- Commissioner Taylor recently joined members of the Men of Faith group in a tour of both Richmond, Virginia and Washington DC. They are also scheduled to visit the Gloucester Institute during Black History Month where City Councilman Aaron Rouse will be hosting an event.
- Commissioner Parke's would like to encourage his fellow Commissioners to please join him at a jubilee in his honor for his 53 years of Priesthood. The event will be held on Sunday, February 17 at the Altmeyer Funeral Home located at 5033 Rouse Drive in Virginia Beach.
- Commissioner Amberman would like to thank her fellow Commissioners for allowing her the opportunity to participate in tonight's meeting via conference call. She is in Mexico providing assistance to a family of an undocumented immigrant who is suffering from serious injuries. Commissioner Amberman is in support of Commissioner Berlucchi's comments about the awards ceremony and supports the decision to postpone the ceremony. She believes that the HRC needs more interaction among ourselves.
- Lt. Lois Thompson shared that she is partnering with students from Cooke Elementary and members of the Chrysler Museum on a Mentoring Program.

VIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Parke made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Blaize seconded; meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.