

ALEXANDRIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2019
7:00 p.m., City Hall
301 King Street, Room 2000
The Chet and Sabra Avery Room

Members Present

Amy Blackwood, Vice Chair
Francisco Duran, Vice Chair
Christopher Harris
Matt Harris, Chair
David Rigsby
Jenny Wade

Staff Present

Jean Kelleher, Director
Miladis Martinez Gutierrez

Excused Members

Danielle Beach
Monika Chapman
Michael Kreps
Susan Kellom
Scott Schwartz

Members Un-excused

Damien Hammond, Sr.

Guests:

Barbara Wilmer, Grassroots Alexandria

1. Call to Order/Introductions by Chair, Matt Harris

Chair Harris commenced the meeting at 7:09 p.m. Introductions were made. No official business can be recorded. The meeting will be for information only.

2. Approval of Minutes of April

The Commission didn't reach a quorum, so no action was taken on the minutes.

3. Executive Committee Report

Chair Harris stated that the Executive Committee met last week.

Nominating Committee

Chair Harris asked for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee. Commissioner Wade and Commissioner Chris Harris volunteered to serve on the nominating committee.

VAHR June 1 Conference and Changes to Bylaws

Chair Harris stated that the VAHR conference will be held on June 1-2, 2019. He stated that he doesn't know if any Commissioners will be attending the conference. He stated that one of the things that are going to be discuss are the changes to the bylaws. Director Kelleher stated that she is meeting with the other Directors from Fairfax, Arlington and Prince William.

Designated Seats from EOC, LT Relations Bd, CFW

Chair Harris stated that the Commission has vacancies for the EOC, Landlord and Tenant Relation Board and Commission for Women.

ACPD Research on Scooters

Vice Chair Blackwood stated that the ACPD had put together a Committee to coordinate with the part of the City that is doing the pilot program and to report back to the Commission. She said that there are currently seven participants in the pilot program in Alexandria, which are the followings: Lime, Lyft, Skip, Jump, Bird, Bolt, and Spin. She also said that they have not receive any reports yet, because the participants are only just getting up to speed and starting. There have been no injuries reported to the pilot program, but apparently tracking injuries and crashes is difficult because there is no specific code used by ER and traumas for scooters. She added that the scooters are getting a lot of negative public attention, but it is also getting a lot of positive public attention. She stated that Lime has several innovations in the works to improve access and public safety. Lime has also met with groups representing the disability community, blind community, and the elderly community to incorporate specific concerns. Lime is requiring riders to be 18 years of age and possess a current driver's license. She also stated that police enforcement has started with scooters.

Legislative

Chair Harris stated that some of the issues that the Commission would like to propose this year are equal pay, family leave, and he also asked Commissioners if they have ideas or suggestion to send their ideas to Jean or him. Director Kelleher stated that she would like to propose that the City Human Rights Code be amended to change the definitions of gender to include every single category. Director Kelleher stated that she will talk to Sarah Taylor about how the Commission might go about doing that.

Staff Appreciation

Chair Harris stated that Director Kelleher suggested bringing lunch to the office for the staff. Director Kelleher will pick a date for the lunch and ask Commissioner to attend if they are available.

4. Director's Report

Census 2020 Complete Count

Director Kelleher stated that the Census 2020 Complete Count Committee has begun meeting and there is a meeting this Wednesday night at the Durant Center. The Committee is being Chaired by Planning and Zoning, Sierra Latham, Demographer, and Carrie Beach, Deputy Director. Director Kelleher stated that there is a big committee composed of community members as well. Director Kelleher said that this issue has come before the Supreme Court and there will be a decision on the citizenship question on the census that will be decided by the end of July, and said they are not sure that it will go the way they want it to go. Director Kelleher stated that if it doesn't go their way, there need to be certain strategies to be able to engage communities who don't trust. She stated that this is definitely a Human Rights issue and said that she will share the emails that she receives.

Universal Representation RFP

Director Kelleher stated that the universal representation request for proposals, this was in the add/delete part of the budget. She said that this was an initiative pushed by Mo Seifeldin, this is to provide representation to preserve due process for those individuals in Alexandria who are at risk of deportation. Mo Seifeldin had proposed that City Council designate \$250,000 for representation, that was reduce to \$100,000, but it did pass in at add/delete. She said that she has been tasked with moving this forward and met today with the head of purchasing and they will do an RFP and will have the Legal Aid Justice Center do a proposal for the City, and maybe AYUDA or Tahirih Justice Center. This will be just for non-profit legal services providers. These services are for Alexandria residents who are facing deportation.

Equity Initiative

Director Kelleher stated that she is working on the City's Race Equity Initiative. She said that, as part of the budget, there is going to be an Equity Officer. She said that the hiring process has already started and said that Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager, would like to have someone on board by August.

Language Assistance

Director Kelleher said that with the help of Namode Khan she has drafted a plan, so they will submit the draft to the City Manager's Office.

Virginia Tech Summer Interns

Director Kelleher stated that she is planning to have two summer interns from Virginia Tech and is hoping to have them work, not only on the equity initiative, but on the language assistance plan, and outreach to underserved communities in Alexandria. She added that Anna McClure volunteered to go T.C. Williams next week and work with some of the government classes, where they are going to interview people who work in the government or private industries. Anna will pitch an outreach challenge problem for the kids to solve and we are looking forward to seeing what they will come up with.

HRC Municipal Equality Index

Director Kelleher stated that the Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index does a scoring of selected Cities in the United States based upon what is offered in protections for LGBTQ individuals. The City of Alexandria has been evaluated since 2012, and our scores have been quite high at least early on and then some of the criteria changed and definitions and scorings. The City scoring dropped from 88 to 82, and there are bonus points available. No one can get more than 100; there is no reason why Alexandria can't get 100 with what is being offered. She said that last year the City was not given 6 points for trans health benefits, even though the City offers trans health benefits to City employees, because it wasn't in the booklet. The City does great things with respect to youth, the aging community and persons with HIV/AIDS, but of all of the bonus points that were available, the City received only the HIV/AIDS 2 points. It is just really a question of what is on the website, what is prominent, so the City is working on these

5. Old or New Business

Chair Harris stated that the DASH Driver union contract will be voted on tomorrow and said that he believes it is going to be passed. He said that they have a very good contract, and drivers will be making almost up to what the Metro bus drivers are making.

Chair Harris stated that at the next Executive Committee meeting they will be reviewing the Police periodic report. Director Kelleher stated that Mr. Goodman Okpara from the Housing Department wants to come back to report to the Executive Committee on fair housing testing.

Chair Harris stated that tomorrow night there is a program at the Lyceum -- Three Centuries of Virginia Women's History, 7:30 p.m., the subtitle is "We Cannot Be Tame Spectators".

Commissioner Rigsby asked if we know how the Metro shut down is going to impact the community, especially for persons with disabilities. Director Kelleher stated that there was a presentation from Transportation Environmental Services to the Alexandria Commission on Person with Disabilities. Vice Chair Blackwood stated that it sounds like DASH is making additional efforts for persons with disabilities and offered the options available.

6. Liaison Reports

Vice Chair Blackwood reported that the ACPD selected the winners for the Gerry Bertier Scholarship award. She added that the Service Dog Committee is working on service dog issues.

7. Announcements /Adjournment

The meeting ended at 7:54 p.m.