

ALEXANDRIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2023
7:00 p.m., City Hall
301 King Street, Room 2000
The Chet and Sabra Avery Room

Members Present

Danielle Beach
Marc Bendick
Matt Harris
Susan Kellom
Elisabeth "PJ" Palmer Johnson
Megan Prince
William Tom Reeder, Jr.
David Rigsby, Vice Chair
Jon Thompson

Staff Present

Jean Kelleher, Director
Miladis Martinez Gutierrez, Adm. Support

Members Excused

Lisl Brunner, Chair
Katherine O'Connell
Scott Schwartz, Vice Chair

1. Call to Order/Introductions by Commissioner Harris

Vice Chair Rigsby called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes of May Meeting

Upon a motion Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Kellom, the Commission approved the minutes of the June meeting. All Commissioners present voted aye.

3. Executive Committee

August 23rd Public Forum on the Supreme Court Decisions

Commissioner Harris stated that he had not reached out to Ludwig Gaines about participating in the forum on August 23, 2023, because he had not heard from the office staff. Director Kelleher stated that the office had reserved the Black History Museum and said that the office was working on getting a litigator for the event. Commissioner Harris stated that the purpose of this forum is to talk about the effects of the Supreme Court decisions and to educate the public on the ramifications of the two Supreme Court cases: the affirmative action and the public accommodation ruling.

Annual Report & Attendance Report

Commissioner Harris stated that Chair Brunner is working on the annual and attendance reports. He said that Chair Brunner had a little emphasis on the attendance report aspect and noticed that a lot of people were excused.

"Avery Amendment"

Commissioner Harris stated that former Commissioner Chet Avery every year proposed that the Commission not meet in August because he went to Maine in August, so the Commission calls it the Avery Amendment. Upon a motion by Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Palmer Johnson the "Avery Amendment" motion passed.

Outreach at ALIVE Food Hub, 510-F South Van Dorn

Commissioner Palmer Johnson reported that she attended the ALIVE outreach event and was approached by three people, and she brought their names and telephone numbers forward. The office has contacted all of them.

4. Elections of Chair and Vice Chairs

Commissioner Harris presented the following slate: Lisl Brunner for Chair, Vice Chair David Rigsby for Vice Chair, and Commissioner Palmer Johnson for Vice Chair. Commissioner Harris asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Upon a motion by Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Kellom, the slate was accepted as presented. All Commissioners present voted aye.

5. Goals for City Fiscal Year & Legislative Proposals

Director Kelleher has reached out to Karen Snow in the City Attorney's office, and she will be working with Jean to add source of income in the Alexandria code as a protected category in Housing.

Director Kelleher stated that community engagement is one of the City Council's priorities and is a good one to hold on to. The Commission began talking about holding a listening session on the west end of the City.

Vice Chair Rigsby mentioned the following topics: Fair and Affordable Housing, Fair Policing Review Board, Community Outreach and Engagement.

Vice Chair Rigsby mentioned educational issues and suggested bundling the Affirmative Action Supreme Court case as well as trans-kids state protection.

Commissioner Bendick, Jr. suggested holding half of the meetings on the west end. Commissioner Prince asked if the Commission has had a high school representative on the Commission and suggested having one. Vice Chair Rigsby stated that the Commission can explore that idea. Director Kelleher stated that the bylaws will need to be changed and asked the Commission to think if they would like to pursue having a seat on the Commission.

Director Kelleher will be sending an email to Commissioners asking them about topics and legislative proposal ideas.

The Commission will continue to work on the previous topics with a deeper dive into engagement, educational issues, and transgender issues.

6. Old & New Business

Director Kelleher reported that she will be attending the EEOC/FEPA conference, which is in Baltimore this year and some office staff will also be attending. She reported that she will be attending the IAHOA conference, which will be held in North Bethesda this year. Director Kelleher reported that because of our contract with the EEOC, she has come up with various ideas to hold a training and outreach session, which needs to be held before the end of the federal fiscal year. She said she was considering inviting EEOC experts to talk about the new Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

Commissioner Harris suggested that Jean provide updates on important city topics once a month via email so that the Commission can be better informed.

Director Kelleher reported that the Naturalization Ceremony is scheduled for September 12, at 1 p.m., at Market Square.

Commissioner Bendick, Jr. followed up on the Sheriff's issue with ICE and asked if Chair Brunner heard back from the Tenants and Workers United and the Legal Aid Justice Center about mediating a meeting with them and the Sheriff. Director Kelleher stated that Chair Brunner has not heard back from them, but the Commission talked about inviting the Legal Aid Justice Center to come to one of the Commission's meetings.

7. Liaison Reports

Commissioner Palmer Johnson reported that the Commission for Women did not meet in July, however, they are having their retreat in August and will continue to plan their 50th anniversary and on September 23, they will have a webinar on affordable housing.

Commissioner Prince Reported that the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities did not meet in July.

8. Announcements /Adjournment

Director Kelleher announced that the Virginia Association for Human Rights is being disbanded and there is \$3,000 in treasury, they have suggested that they do one final training for Commissioners in Virginia Beach on September 23, 2023.

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Kellom/Commissioner Palmer Johnson **PASSED** unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.