

CITY OF FAIRMONT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes of:

Regular Meeting

May 26, 2021 – 5:30p.m.

The duly called and noticed meeting of the City of Fairmont Human Rights Commission was held on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Larry Buckland, Commission Chairperson, called the meeting to order and asked for a roll call of members.

Roll Call of Members

Members Present:

Dani DeVito

Jim Nolan

Cyndi Straight

Larry Buckland

Royce Lyden

Whereupon, a quorum of commissioners was determined to be present for the purposes of conducting the business of said commission as set forth on the Agenda.

Dani DeVito made a motion to excuse Miki Demary.

Jim Nolan seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

In RE: Approval of Meeting Minutes from 3/24/21: Minutes were sent out for review by the commissioners prior to the meeting. No discussion took place.

Royce Lyden moved that the minutes be approved.

Jim Nolan seconded the motion.

Minutes were approved.

In Re: Report from Committee on Education and Community Forum:

- Jim Norton gave an update on Building Bridge of Respect event from Renee Verbanic
 - **SEE ATTACHED
 - Inclusivity=Marion County Strong event on July 22-23
 - Hoping that a lot of the City officials and City leaders will join the training.
 - Building Bridges will be on July 24 at East Marion Park
 - Final event on July 25 at Life UMC.
- Kathy Islam (event planning committee member) asked if the HRC would be willing to have a table at the Saturday, July 24th event.
- Jim Nolan made a motion to sponsor the events on July 22-25 as a partner.
 - Dani DeVito seconded the motion.

- Motion carried.

In Re: Legislative Update with Fairness WV (Andrew Schneider):

- A lawsuit was filed in federal court today by the ACLU-WV and Lambda Legal against the recent legislation banning trans students from participating in school sports on behalf of a student in the state.
 - They expect the federal courts to rule in the student's favor.
- Said this was hands-down the worst legislative session he's ever seen
 - He was personally targeted for retaliation a couple weeks into the session.
 - There were more anti-LGBTQ+ laws than we've ever seen
 - There was a bill to prevent LGBTQ+ people from being foster parents
 - Fairness helped to generate more than 10,000 emails to stop the foster care bill.
 - There were 6-7 anti-trans bills, including the school sports bill.
 - Legislature also denied any opportunity for a trans person to even speak in front of them about it during discussions
- He believes that 2022 will correct some of the issues what we saw in 2020
 - They are doing a lot of education currently on trans issues across the state.
- Fairness WV is also working hard to pass the Equality Act on a national level.
- Fairness WV would love to see Fairmont be able to turn our LGBTQ+ policies into an actual ordinance within the city
- Fairness WV will be taking part in the Building Bridge event in July

In Re: Open Citizen Forum:

- Nicole Wall speaking on behalf of the WVU Trans Health Advisory Board (CAB)
 - She is helping to promote a study by Dr. Megan Gandy at WVU
 - The study is open to all trans/gender diverse adults and the parents of trans/gender diverse youth.
 - The study involves first taking a 10 minute survey to see if you are eligible to take part in the focus group.
 - Really trying to get people involved in the study.
 - The focus group is about 90-120 minutes focusing on trans/gender diverse healthcare in the state.
 - WVU also now has a gender services clinic and support groups for parents of trans/gender diverse kids.
 - **FLYER ATTACHED

In Re: Announcements:

- Jim Nolan
 - Said we had some great discussions and speakers tonight.
 - Gave a shout out to Sarah Marion and David Kirk on their story in the newspaper on the one year anniversary of George Floyd's murder.
 - He recently had an OpEd in the USA Today.

- Cyndi Straight
 - None.
- Royce Lyden
 - Encouraged everyone to go to the Fairness WV Facebook page to find more about what they are doing and how to get involved.
- Dani DeVito
 - Reminded everyone about the Fairmont Family Fund and to visit the Tygart Valley United Way's page for more information.
- Larry Buckland
 - Reminded everyone about the Untied Way's Day of Action.
 - Said that this past Sunday's march in memory of George Floyd was a really nice afternoon.
 - Asked that people get involved with the Building Bridges event.

Consideration of Business

Pending Business: NONE

New Business: NONE

Financial Report: NONE

Events/Forums: NONE

Adjournment

Dani DeVito made a motion to adjourn.
 Motion seconded by Royce Lyden and carried.
 Meeting adjourned.

Approved this the 23 day of June, 2021.


 CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:


 Secretary

(Submitted to the Executive Committee of Shalom and to Valerie Means, City Manager November, 2020 and updated on May 24, 2021 for the City Council Mtg)

Marion County's Prevention Coalition, (your active ASSET-BASED-COMMUNITY-DEVELOPMENT non-profit for over 20 years) the **Communities of Shalom**, (specifically the MultiCultural Committee and the Health & Wellness Committee) in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission has completed the original pilot group book study "How to be an Anti-Racist" by **Ibram Kendi**.

One of our ON-GOING commitments is to offer NUMEROUS and VARIED educational sessions to the community at large, targeting the City and County Leadership then inviting the broader community audience.

We wanted you to be aware of the time-line that we (the committee and coalition members) tentatively sketched out...because you are an integral part of it...

Phase 1: We began the PILOT book study on Kendi's "How to be an Anti-Racist" in October, 2020. We invited our Shalom Coalition members, and a few guests, and met 6 times, once a week, via ZOOM covering 3 chapters each time. We had 6 facilitators who volunteered their time. **This is complete.**

Phase 2: The 6 Shalom facilitators have already met numerous times to review the evaluations, brainstorm facilitative strategies and begin to scope out how best to offer the next step. It's likely that we'll have at least 2 more meetings to plan. Our plan is to facilitate another book study for our city/county leadership. Books will be delivered to those new members. We are also exploring Kendi's books on tape and the adolescent version Kendi has written for youth. We will work with Valerie Means, city manager, to coordinate best times and carve out a schedule for the 2021 book study. We are also exploring Emmanuel Acho's **Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man** for additional food for thought. Both books will be provided to participants free of charge (prevention funding from WV Prevention Solutions has made this possible) **This is partially-complete.**

Phase 3: We are already providing ZOOM mini-sessions called '65 Minutes of Support, Sensibility and Skills' on a variety of timely topics. These sessions should be viewed as a continuation of our BUILDING BRIDGES OF RESPECT effort, which has been a respected and valued conference event for 20 years in Marion County. They are a series but independent of each other. These began pre-holiday, December, 2020 and will continue throughout 2021. The Health & Wellness Shalom committee will help in setting direction on which topics to offer and in what order. Renée will act as coordinator and facilitator of these ZOOM workshops, w' collaboration from West Virginia Prevention Solutions. Guest speakers would be invited, depending on the topic. City Council and city leadership have been invited to each one of these via EVENTBRITE.

The completed topics offered so far have been:

December = Stress Management During a Pandemic Holiday

January = Pandemic Habits, Make 'Em? Keep 'Em? Break 'Em?

February = Empathy Means Connection

March = Navigating Difficult Conversations

April = Label Jars, Not People: Words Matter

May = Addressing Stigma continued

June is slated to cover more on STIGMA associated with mental illness and addiction

Phase 4: The following effort has been on the back burner as we were waiting on viable vaccinations to prove their sustainability, and when we've determined it's safer to be in person. Again, it's an effort collaboratively between the Human Rights Commission and the Communities of Shalom to Build Bridges of Respect. We have been planning on partnering with WVU Extension to provide "**Inclusivity = Marion County Strong!**" **workshops** for community leaders (20-25 at a time). These will be LIVE 3 hours long each session, held up at the High Technology Foundation on the NASA campus. This effort is tentatively scheduled for **July 22nd and 23rd, a Thursday, Friday.** There will be at least 4 three hour sessions made available to choose. But our PRIMARY GOAL is to include and prioritize participation from our MARION COUNTY LEADERSHIP. WVU Ext facilitators will work around your schedules, offering the 3 hour session either in the morning, afternoon or evening for 3 hours. WVU Ext is making these trainings available to other cities around West Virginia, always emphasizing city leadership. Their fee is approx \$3000 and our plan is to request funding assistance from WV Prevention Solutions. HOWEVER, we want to be sure to get buy-in from you all this evening BEFORE we proceed on plans and incur this cost. We cannot emphasize enough how much of a priority DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY and REPRESENTATION is for our town and our communities. And, while we can offer this to the general public and guarantee to pack the seats with participation, we are SPECIFICALLY targeting our county leadership. (city council, commissioners, law enforcement, business leaders, etc) . And we will not hold these sessions until you indicate to us that you are interested as a Council to participate.

Phase 5: And lastly, we cordially invite you to our continued BUILDING BRIDGES OF RESPECT event on July 24th at WaveTek Pavilions from 10 – 4PM where we will be celebrating DIVERSITY, REPRESENTATION and INCLUSIVITY with crafters, family engagement activities and resource tables and July 25th at LIFE UMC with musicians, yoga and zumba for adults and kids, and labyrinth walking from 2 – 6 PM. Watch for those invitations!

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Verbanic, Consultant
Communities of Shalom Prevention Coalition