



MELROSE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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February 15th, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Bonnie Clapp (Chair), Linda Apple, Randall Carter, Joe Philips, Jake Rogers, Jay Stapp, Jennifer Strasburger, Fatma Ulku Duru,

Members Absent: Kelsey Lima, Rev. Dr. Susanne Intriligator (Clergy Liaison), Lizbeth DeSelm (City Council Liaison), Manjula Karamcheti (City Council Liaison)

Members of Public: Mr. Bennett

Call to Order: Virtual meeting was called to order by Chair Bonnie Clapp at 7:03 pm with a quorum of 7 Commissioners present.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Prior Meeting Minutes:

- Meeting minutes from October 17, 2023 and December 14, 2023 were presented
- Commissioner Strasburger asked for an addition to the October 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes that a discussion about the Lincoln School's PTO World Culture Night occurred.
- Approval of October 17, 2023, with addition, and December 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Chair Clapp requested that Commissioner Ulku Duru be Clerk for tonight's meeting

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair noted that one member of the public was present - James Bennett. The Chair opened public participation. Mr. Bennett stated that he was present to observe tonight's meeting as members of the community are wondering what the Melrose Human Rights Commission is doing.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Chairperson's Administrative Report:

- Commissioner Phillips began taking Meeting Minutes for the remainder of the meeting.
- **Recruitment Efforts:**
 - Chairpersons noted two vacancies as Commissioner DeBrielle has resigned and Commissioner Strasburger and Chair Clapp's three term is up and both are not pursuing a second term. This leaves three current vacancies and one upcoming vacancy when Chair Clapp leaves at the end of FY24.
 - Continue to work on recruitment efforts for ex. Coffee w/Commissioner and MVMMS/MHS Student Interns. Chair Clapp has reached out to Commission on Disability to request a example of their student intern 'job posting'
 - It was discussed that other groups within the city are doing like-minded work (e.g., RJCC/FOMM, FBLN) and would we like to reach out to see if they would be interested in

pursuing one of the current/upcoming vacancies?

- Commissioner Rogers expressed he felt it was important to continue w/Coffee with a Commissioner and pursue MHRC Student Internships as he feels it's important to help with internships/youth involvement. Commissioner Rogers suggested reaching out to parents and school leaders, but they school leaders have their hands full and haven't been too responsive – maybe Bert Whittier and Sam Hammer? Commissioner Rogers offered to reach out to Mr. Whittier to get initial buy in from him and will try to establish a foothold w/ LGBTQ youth groups.
- **Conflict of Interest Training:** Chair Clapp reminded commissioners that Conflict of Interest training is an annual requirement of all municipal employees and was due January 18, 2024.
- **Annual Election:**
 - Chair Clapp reminded commissioners that the Annual Election will occur at the next meeting. All Executive positions are up for election, as Chair Clapp is not seeking re-election, our Vice Chair (Commissioner DeBrielle resigned), our Treasurer (Commissioner Strasburger is not seeking a second term and this is her last meeting), and we currently do not have a Clerk.
 - After Annual Election, the newly elected Chair will meet with the City Council Liaison to define appropriate interaction and communication for the fiscal year
 - On or before April 1, 2024, the Clerk will notify the City Clerk of the regularly scheduled meeting times, dates, and locations for the calendar year. Chair Clapp noted that this does not prevent you from amending your meeting schedule during the year.
 - Commissioner Apple asked what happens if we cannot fill Executive positions. Chair Clapp said that she would reach out to the Mayor's Office with that question.
 - Chair Clapp said that she would also inquire with the Mayor's Office about the possibility of Co-Chairs

Treasurer's Report:

- General Account Balance (02/15/2024): **\$2,500** **Must be spent by end of FY24 (June 30, 2024)*
 - \$500.00 to Opening Doors Project for MLK '24 Evening Program (11/17/2023) was processed
- Donation Account Balance (02/15/2024): **\$2,425** **Can carry-over past fiscal year ending*
- Current Total (12/14/2023): **\$4,925**
- Approved FY24 Expenditures:

UPDATES

Potential Partnership & Collaborations Action Items:

- Updating Melrose Stakeholders Contact List

Potential Advocacy Action Items:

- None to Report

Potential Communications & Community Awareness Action Items:

Restructuring Tasks:

- Chair Clapp is concerned w/ only having 3 co-hosting participants. She inquired whether the HRC could re-release the Restructuring Statement and Google Link form. Commissioner Apple supported working with the Mayor's Office to re-release the Restructuring Statement and Google Form.

Partnerships & Collaborations Report:

- DEI Task Force (JP)
 - There was no update to report subsequent to the most recent regular meeting.
- Melrose Public School's PTO DEIB Reps (BC)
 - There was no update to report subsequent to the most recent regular meeting.

Advocacy Report:

- Chair Clapp asked for all the commissioners to review the Visions City of Melrose Assessment Report Survey, April 2022
- Chair Clapp reached out to Lily/Lauren about other community survey; Lily provided a link to [Melrose's DEI Initiatives to Date](#)
- Chair Clapp asked for all commissioners to look over both the Visions City of Melrose Assessment Report Survey and [Melrose's DEI Initiatives to Date](#) and come prepared to respond to the following questions:
 - What are the current human rights needs of Melrose?
 - What is one way the Melrose Human Rights Commission can help meet these needs?
- Commissioner Apple requested whether we could include two personal reflection questions as well?
 - Why did you join the MHRC?
 - What are you hoping to get from your role as a commissioner going forward?

Communication & Community Awareness Report:

- **Hotline, HRC City of Melrose Email, and Social Media Messaging (BC)**
 - There was no update to report subsequent to the most recent regular meeting.
- **MLK Weekend of Service Report - January 14-15 (BC)**
 - **Sunday, January 14 Evening Program:** Co-sponsored [The Opening Doors Concert](#) @ 7PM at Melrose Unitarian Universalist Church
 - **Monday, January 15 Community Service Activities:**
 - 11 community host organizations
 - Over 500 community service activities offered
 - 187 community service activities completed
- **Lincoln School PTO World Culture Night - Friday, March 8, 2024 (JS)**
 - Lincoln School reached out to Commissioner Strasburger and wondered if MHRC could be co-sponsors of the event – provide same level of support as last year
 - Commissioner Strasburger made a motion to support the event by \$500 for Lincoln School International school event.
 - Commissioner Ulku Duru seconded the motion. Chair Clapp did roll call to vote on the motion. Six yes votes and the motion passed.
 - Chair Clapp shared that the Roosevelt PTO is also bringing back a World Culture Night to their school community. They reached out to Chair Clapp as they hoped to connect to garner more information about Lincoln PTO's World Culture Night; they did not want financial support or publicity.
 - Commissioner Clapp proposed inviting all PTOs to City Hall from 6-7 and allow Lincoln to share more information on their World Culture Night and how all schools could host their own, if they wanted to.

- o Commissioner Rogers inquired whether we could turn this same meeting into a recruiting opportunity

Other and/or Unfinished Business:

- There was no other or unfinished business discussed.

New Business:

- **Pride 2024:**
 - o Commissioner Strasburger shared a Pride Proposal with the full commission:
 - **Date:** 6/14 (flag raising on City Hall)
 - **Location:** Beebe Estate, Rain Location - Highlands Congregational
 - **Budget:** HRC @ 1000 (inclusive of Chamber fee) plus whatever is raised by appeal via Chamber of Commerce
 - **Partners:** TBD (ideas: FYACS, EPIC, Melrose Community Gay/Straight Alliance, open call)
 - **HRC Responsibilities:** Reserve venues, coordinate Mayoral Appearance, relating progress of donations and total available funds to other groups, processing invoices & reimbursements, turn on online apparel store for designs by [Chiara Pieri](#)(this year)
 - **Other Groups:** order of program, food or no food, info tables, music, MC, sourcing tents, decorations, setup & breakdown, promotional printing & signage
 - **Suggested Vendors:** Florence Lee (face painting), Edward Lanzilotta (sound system), Police detail, Girl Skull (music)
 - o Chair Clapp shared that Kris Rodolico (Executive Director, Follow Your Art Community Studios) emailed herself and James Conforti (Activities Coordinator, Milano Center) as the Milano Center has already secured a grant to support LGBTQ programming. Both the Milano Center and FYACS would be willing to co-host/partner on Pride 2024. They shared a proposed date of Friday, June 14, as FYACS is planning a birthday celebration on the weekend of June 7-8; last day of school is on Wednesday, June 12; Juneteenth is on Wednesday, June 19.
 - o Chair Clapp asked for discussion. She raised concern that the community is NOT aware that MHRC is not doing community-wide events this year and reiterated that she would like to get the re-release of the Restructuring Statement and Google Form out.
 - o Commissioner Rogers asked about the Pride event scheduling – feels the event is limited to the community – suggested maybe some sort of parade – create more reach within community.
 - o Commissioner Apple suggested that maybe not Pride does not have to be just one just event but multiple events for within the city
 - o Commissioner Strasburger wondered if a similar joint meeting like Lincoln/Roosevelt for Pride 2024 could occur.
 - o Commissioner Ulku Duru asked about Iftar and Commissioner Apple clarified that the

MHRC is not doing events this year.

- o Chair Clapp proposed doing “Community Connection Meetings” for Pride and or other community events like Iftar. Commissioner Carter said he would attend the Pride Community Connection Meeting to be a resource since he helped do the planning last year.
- o Commissioner Strasburger inquired how we want to decide who or which groups to give financial support to?
- o Chair Clapp asked if we can do grant writing for community groups?
- o Commissioner Strasburger inquired whether we can consider doing reimbursement up to a certain dollar amount?
- o Chair Clapp said that she will reach out to city for direction for budget dollars

Adjournment:

- A motion to adjourn was made by L. Apple and seconded by R. Carter. **Motion passed with no objections.**
- Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.