

## CITY OF FAIRMONT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**Minutes of:  
Regular Meeting  
February 24th, 2021 – 5:30p.m.**

The duly called and noticed meeting of the City of Fairmont Human Rights Commission was held on Wednesday, February 24th, 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  
Tiffany Samuels  
Miki Demary

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.

**In RE: Approval of Meeting Minutes from 1/27/21:** Minutes were sent out for review by the commissioners prior to the meeting. No discussion took place.

Dani DeVito 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 Nolan
  - SEE ATTACHMENT
- Jim Norton mentioned the Building Bridges of Respect meeting set for Friday.
  - Event will be planned in response to the Will Graham Celebration
  - Gave a brief recap of the Will Graham Celebration and the Building Bridges counter-event
- Dani DeVito mentioned writing to legislators about the Fairness Act and the education bill banning GSA, etc. in schools

#### **In Re: Update on Will Graham Celebration:**

- Initial event is planned for April at Trinity Assembly of God

- Dates for the Celebration are July 23-25, 2021 at Duvall-Rosier Field on the campus of Fairmont State University.
- Nancy Parks mentioned that Dr. Martin (President of FSU) is very supportive of the event.

**In Re: Selection of 2021 Commission Officers:**

- Cyndi Straight nominated Larry Buckland for the role of Chair.
  - Jim Nolan seconded.
  - Motion carried.
- Dani DeVito nominated Miki Demary to serve as Vice Chair.
  - Jim Nolan seconded.
  - Motion carried.
- Jim Nolan nominated Dani DeVito to continue serving as Secretary.
  - Cyndi Straight seconded.
  - Motion carried.

**In Re: Open Citizen Forum:**

- Cathy Reed
  - Wanted to let the group know that she, Phil Reed, and Jim Norton are in the middle of a restorative justice class with people from around the country.

**In Re: Announcements:**

- Cyndi Straight
  - Is honored to be a part of the commission and said that we have accomplished a lot in a short time.
- Jim Nolan
  - Wanted to make sure that everyone knows that he is available to talk to anyone about the items that he discusses in our meetings and let them know how they can get involved.
- Tiffany Samuels
  - Today, she and Romelia Hodges partnered with the Marion Co. Health Dept. to give COVID vaccines to more than 70 members of the African American community.
  - Dani asked about any other upcoming clinics and offered the commission's help in finding volunteers if needed.
- Royce Lyden
  - Reminded everyone about the upcoming Communities of Shalom call.
- Dani DeVito
  - Thanked everyone for attending and congratulated the officers.
- Larry Buckland
  - Thanked everyone for coming and encouraged them to invite people. Encouraged everyone to be courageous and told them to be inclusive inviting new people to attend.

**Consideration of Business**

**Pending Business:** NONE

**New Business:** NONE

**Financial Report:** NONE

**Events/Forums:** NONE

**Adjournment**

Jim Nolan made a motion to adjourn.

Motion seconded by Cyndi Straight and carried.

Meeting adjourned.

Approved this the 24 day of March, 2021.

  
CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

  
Secretary

FAIRMONT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



# HRC Education Committee

February 2021 report

# Love has no labels

- [\(2552\) Love Has No Labels | Diversity & Inclusion | Ad Council – YouTube](#)



# Significance of this video for our work at HRC

- [Jamboard #1: Envisioning world where we redirect resources away from policing poverty and toward greater community care - Google Jamboard](#)
- Perspective on Education - “How do we know what we know?”

# Activity this month

- Criminal justice reform summit  
(January 28, 2021 – online and free)



WVPRISONREFORM.ORG

Criminal Justice Reform Summit: Poverty And The Criminal Justice System | WV Criminal Law Reform Coalition

- Equity Summit – Designing an Antiracist Future



- Communities of Shalom – retreat to plan this year's activities  
(2/18/2021)



# Systemic Bias in Policing

- Basic Point: Discrimination in policing is not the result of “bad apple” cops *deviating* from standard police policy. Instead, it is *conformity* to these policies that is the problem.
  - 8% African American in population in Fairmont
  - Arrest rate for African Americans in Fairmont in 2019 was 2.8 times higher than for whites.
  - During the past 10 years African Americans 75% of drug arrests by Three Rivers Drug Task Force
- Work to reduce discrimination and bias in policing through education and policy change
  - Join with other groups such as Human Rights Commission and Pastoral Alliance to institute educational opportunities and policy change to reduce bias in policing in measurable ways.
  - Develop workshop opportunities for police on topics such as:
    - Community dynamics and policing
    - Situational policing
    - Work to establish community partnerships for police reform



# Local Hate Crime & Anti Discrimination Ordinance

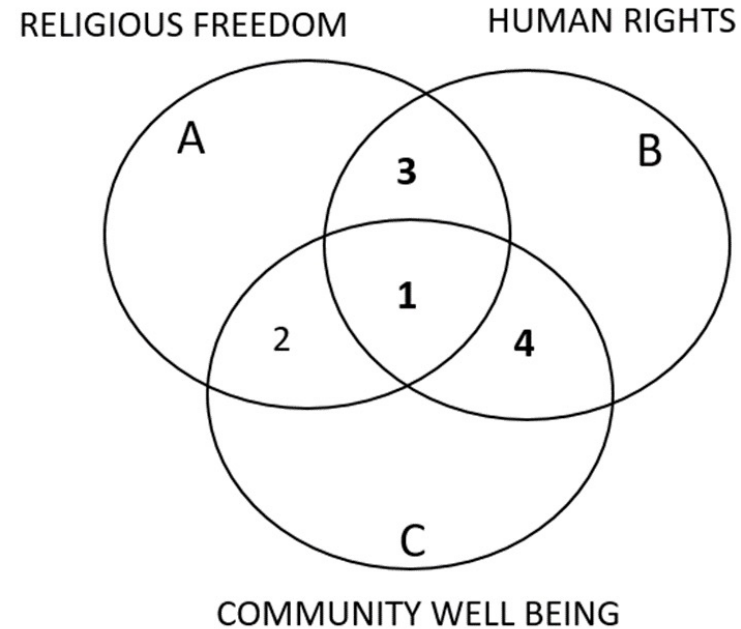
- Background:

- West Virginia has no statewide law that protect LGBTQ people from discrimination.
- West Virginia Supreme Court ruled attacks against LGBTQ people are not hate crimes.

Objective: To support and work toward passage of local antidiscrimination laws to protect LGBTQ citizens.

# Community Building

Background: Many of the multicultural problems in Fairmont rest at the intersections of religious freedom, human rights, and community well being.



- Sponsor events that foster greater understanding between differing groups, cultures and individuals, such as the on-going Building Bridges of Respect program of Communities of Shalom.
- Host activities for city leaders and community members on community dynamics, community safety and well being.
- Develop activities that address the intersections of religious freedom, human rights, and public safety. For example, work with the Fairmont HRC and Council of Churches to host podcasts on topics of religious freedom and LGBTQ rights or systemic bias

# Education

- Provide book study groups around issues of antiracism and antidiscrimination generally.
- Provide trainings in Awareness, Analysis, Action, Accountability, and Allyship aimed at systemic discrimination (Barbara Love)
- Continue outreach to public schools on topics of diversity and multiculturalism.

# Policy

- Support local and statewide anti discrimination policies, statutes and ordinances.



CONNECTING TO EACH OTHER

