

The City Of Albany Commission on Human Rights
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday October 16, 2018 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Mayors Conference Room

Meeting Facilitator: Brenda Robinson, Chairperson

Invitees: Ronald Dunn Vice-Chair, Brenda Robinson, Linda Hunt, Judith Mazza, Valerie Alexander, Shontell Smith, Rosie Love, Aaron Moore, Harriet Lewis,

Jellisa Joseph, Peachie Jones

Absent: Rosie Love (excused), Shontell Smith

list of 14 items

1. Approval of Minutes
Approval of the September 20, 2018 Meeting Minutes is postponed to the November 22 meeting. The minutes for the September meeting were prepared by Chair, Brenda Robinson. Brenda noticed some typos and wants to correct them. She will send them out before the next meeting.
2. Officer Election
The elections were postponed from the last meeting because there was no quorum. Commission on Human Rights Offices are Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
 - a. Chair: Ron asked Brenda Robinson if she would accept the position of chair again, and Brenda answered that she would. There were no other volunteers. Harriet nominated Brenda for Commission Chair, and Ron seconded the nomination. All members voted to elect Brenda Robinson as Commission Chair.
 - b. Vice Chair: Judith nominated Ronald Dunn for Vice Chair, and Brenda seconded the nomination. There were no other volunteers. All members voted to elect Ronald Dunn as Commission Vice Chair.
 - c. Secretary: Linda Hunt expressed an interest in serving as Secretary if others were not interested in this position. There were no other volunteers. Brenda nominated Linda Hunt for Secretary, and Judith seconded the nomination. All members voted to elect Linda Hunt as Commission Secretary.
 - d. Treasurer: Brenda stated that the Commission does not have a direct allocation of funds at this time. However, we need a Treasurer to review expenses and handle receipts for events such as our annual reception. Ron added that it is possible that the Commission may receive a direct allocation of funds from the City in the m0near future. Judith Mazza expressed an interest in serving as Treasurer. Brenda nominated Judith for Treasurer. All members elected Judith Mazda as Commission Treasurer.

Chair Report

Brenda presented the Chair Report under Hot topics, item 4.

4. Hot Topics

a. Albany Violence

Brenda has represented the Commission by attending various meetings in the last month following the two most recent homicides in Albany. Several community groups are exploring ways to improve access to jobs and recreational opportunities for younger adults in Albany.

- i. Brenda and Aaron Moore discussed the decline of free or low-cost after school activities for children and the need for organizations to increase available programs.
- ii. Brenda said that she also has participated in meetings to find solutions to incidents of violence and disruptive behavior at the Arbor Hill Library. One step is to suggest that library patrons bring behavioral issues to the attention of library staff.
- iii. The Commission will continue to send condolence letters to honor victims of violence.
- iv. Brenda invited Commissioners to bring further information to the table as plans and programs to stop further violence develop.

b. Police Involved Shooting

Brenda, along with Aaron, also reported on the recent Public Safety Meeting that they attended at City Hall. The meeting was attended by new Albany Police Chief, Eric Hawkins. The meeting also was attended by Executive Director of the Center for Law and Justice, Dr. Alice P. Green. Commander Basil made a presentation. Brenda and Aaron agreed that although there are different views about what happened during the recent police shooting, the meeting was positive inasmuch as there was a dialog among participants, and comments were made by members of the public.

5. Committees

In response to a question from new Commissioner, Aaron Moore, Brenda explained that the Commission has the following Standing Committees: Education, Martin Luther King (MLK) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Education Committee provides information to the public about issues of discrimination, such as the forum Ron presented about the travel ban last winter. Commission members participate in the March and other Martin Luther King holiday celebratory activities. Albany has an ADA Coordinator and an ADA Advisory Committee that addresses issues that affect residents of Albany with disabilities. The Commission has a representative who serves on the Advisory Committee.

- a. Education Committee: Brenda suggested that issues under the Commission’s prior LGBTQ and refugee committees could be merged into the Education Committee. Judith suggested that the Commission consider holding two or three educational forums before June,2019. Linda suggested that the Commission post information about voting before the election. Peachie Jones will add links to the Ny State and Albany County Boards of Elections, the League of Women Voters and the Department of Education in Albany for School Board elections. Linda volunteered to research available resources to include on the Commission’s website for persons who encounter problems voting on Election Day.
 - b. The MLK Committee will contact the State about upcoming 2019 MLK activities.
 - c. The City of Albany ADA Coordinator took another job, so the ADA Advisory Committee will remain inactive until the City hires a new ADA Coordinator.
6. Events:
- a. CHR Reception
Proposed dates are for the week of April 15, 2019. Jellisa will check which days the Rotunda is available during that week.
 - b. Community
 - i. Aaron announced two community events. A workshop called “reclaim” will take place on October 27, 2018. It is sponsored by the African-American Cultural Club. This workshop will provide a day of healing to address trauma, by and for persons of color. Peachie Jones will send out the “Reclaim” flyer and other flyers to a list of various neighborhood and social organizations in Albany that she is compiling.
 - ii. Albany Capital Center is planning the first black Expo to welcome African-American business owners, artists, and educators for Nov. 10, 2018. The event aims to grow minority-owned businesses, celebrate culture, and create a forum for the black community.
7. Executive Director (ED) Report
- a. Complaints
Jellisa reported that only one complaint was received last month. It was a repeat complaint by a prisoner that contained additional issues. Jellisa sent the complaint to Prisoner’s Legal Services.
 - b. Jobs
The City of Albany is holding a second chance job fair on October 17 targeting all job seekers, but especially aimed for those reentering the workforce following incarceration. Jellisa’s understanding is that these hearings will continue once a month through the end of the year, at least. Harriet asked whether the City is tracking data such as how many people put in job applicataions and how many get jobs as a result of these job fares. Jellisa said that the City can track such information for its applicants and employees hired through its new Web Portal.

Jellisa said that she believes that the City will send surveys to organizations that participate in the job fairs.

c. Updates

- i. Jellisa reported that this month is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and Thursday, October 18, is wear purple day, to show support for domestic violence survivors.
- ii. The City of Albany issued a new sexual harassment policy based on changes to New York State Law. The new policy defines what sexual harassment is, the different types, the reporting structure for complaints and other available avenues for remedies. The new policy will be posted on the Commission's website.

Public Comment: respectfully limited to 5 minutes per person (none)

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Linda Hunt