

**ROCKVILLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

Cisco WebEx Conference  
Wednesday, March 23, 2022  
7:30 p.m.

**Member Attendance:** Amina Shafi Rogers (Co-Chair), Andrew Lin (Co-Chair), Vice-Chair Gabrielle Zwi, Oyebisi Olatoye, James Pearce, Molly Cullen, Sinan Wolf-Gazo, Bethany Pereira, Kaoru Sakabe

**Staff Liaisons:** Ali Hoy, Councilmember Dr. David Myles

**Student Ambassadors:** Rokia “Riki” Doumbia, Anastasia Caruso

**Guests:** Brian Rogers (Cultural Arts Commissioner)

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm.
- II. **Welcoming of Guests** – The Commission welcomed back two student ambassadors, Riki Doumbia and Anastasia Caruso. They also welcomed Brian Rogers from the Cultural Arts Commission.
- III. **Adoption of Meeting Agenda and Minutes** – Upon motion, seconded, and approved, the meeting agenda and January and February meeting minutes were adopted.

Co-Chair Lin announced the resignation of Kindra Jones, whose appointment was scheduled to end in October.

**IV. Staff Report**

- A. **“IDEA” Training – Diversity and Inclusion Workshop** - Liaison Hoy reported that Rockville Reports published articles in the March and April editions to advertise event registration. Additional outreach to Rockville high schools was provided by the Community Services Division Youth and Family Counseling Specialist, who works with schools to provide mental health counseling to students.

The DEI Subcommittee has changed the name of the program to “IDEA” Training, which stands for “Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access.”

Commissioner Olatoye reported on the interactive curriculum with David Smith, a consultant who has run the workshop for the HRC in the past. The workshop plans to emphasize leadership roles and provide guidance and information about diversity, inclusion, equity and access. Commissioner Olatoye and David Smith will begin the event with an interactive conversation about Diversity and Inclusion. It will be followed by a presentation on Equity by Shannon Wilson,

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Senior Advisor for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Global Public Affairs. Commissioner Zwi will assist in an Access discussion relating to her work as a disability justice advocate at college.

The commissioners discussed ideas for ice breakers. The student ambassadors, Riki Doumbia and Anastasia Caruso, offered to assist with the event.

- B. **Pride** - The Pride Subcommittee shared that the HRC is planning a virtual event on June 5, 2022 with prompted breakout rooms and an in-person event to be held on June 26, 2022. Liaison Hoy said that Rockville Reports published articles in the March and April editions to advertise for event sponsors and performers.

Co-Chair Rogers reviewed the list of topics on the Pride agenda, including fundraising, outreach, volunteers and performances. The Cultural Arts Commissioner (CAC) liaison, Brian Rogers, stated that the CAC would like to assist with the Pride event. In the past, the CAC has provided crafting stations for children.

## V. **Chair Report**

- A. **HRC and HSAC Survey** - Co-Chair Lin discussed the March 7, 2022 presentation to Mayor and Council of the report and findings of the community wellbeing survey jointly developed by the Human Services Advisory Commission and Human Rights Commission. They received good feedback from Mayor and Council about the survey and findings, including suggestions to bring diversity and inclusion training to Boards, Commissions and City residents and working more collaboratively with other groups and jurisdictions to promote the availability of human services. Councilmember Myles discussed the results relating to limited childcare options and other human services. Co-Chair Lin brought up that the survey results gathered information on sources of experienced discrimination and harassment, such as neighbors and school systems; addressing such sources of discrimination directly aligns with the Commission's community mediation role.

Co-Chair Lin thanked Commissioners Sakabe and Cullen for their assistance in reviewing the survey results and preparing the survey report.

**Board of Supervisors of Elections** – Co-Chair Lin restated the purpose of the joint project with the Board of Supervisors of Elections and the Asian Pacific American Task Force to explore ways to increase voter participation among the City's Asian American population. The group has been meeting since December and has been focusing on translation, registration and overall voter assistance at the polls. The group has been gathering a list of Asian churches and schools for outreach purposes.

- B. **Charter Review Commission Response:** Co-Chair Lin recapped the HRC's response to the Charter Review Commission's questionnaire concerning potential

changes to how the City conducts elections. The major topics relating to voting are whether to coincide City elections with Presidential election cycles, shifting to a district model, and whether to expand the number of councilmembers from four to six.

- C. **Mayor and Council Presentation** – Liaison Hoy reminded the commissioners that the HRC has been asked to make a 20-30 minute presentation to Mayor and Council about the Commission’s past work and future goals in serving the City of Rockville.

Co-Chair Lin reviewed the list of the Commission’s current programs, including:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration
- Rockville Pride Celebration
- Student Ambassador Program
- Inclusion Diversity Equity & Access Program
- Human Rights Day
- Collaboration with Boards and Commissions
  - “Survey of the Wellbeing and Needs of the Rockville Community,” in collaboration with the Human Services Advisory Commission
  - Voter Engagement Project with the Board of Supervisors of Elections and the Asian Pacific American Task Force
  - Memorializing lynching victims and racial history with the Montgomery County Remembrance and Reconciliation Commission
- Voter Registration and Education
- Civic Education and Engagement
- Responses to City reports, plans and questionnaires

The Commissioner’s discussed potential additional future programs, expanding civic education through programs and flyers, using the HSAC/HRC survey results to guide programming, and expanding Human Rights Day programming and disability awareness programming. Commissioner Zwi brought up that Rockville is well positioned to be a Human Rights City, of which there are only 11 in the Country, and will provide more information in May 2022.

Upon motion, seconded, and approved, the list of topics to be presented in April to Mayor and Council was adopted. Co-Chairs Lin and Rogers were nominated to present.

## **VI. Other Committee Reports**

- A. **Current Affairs Committee** – Commissioner Cullen spoke about the Montgomery County School Board’s discussions about police in schools, following a shooting in January. The School Board has discussed bringing back armed police to schools to focus on violence and sexual assault, with no input on

disciplinary cases. Parents and some advocacy groups have been asking for money to be used for mental health.

**VII. Old Business**

A. **Montgomery County Reconciliation Commission** – Commissioner Olatoye provided an update on the County’s Reconciliation Commission, which met in March and plans to meet again in May. The Reconciliation Commission is planning a trip to retrace the Freedom Trail in the South at the end of April.

**VIII. New Business and Announcements** – Liaison Hoy mentioned that the Montgomery County Branch of the NAACP is hosting an Annual Freedom Fund event on Sunday, May 15, 2022. The City of Rockville Human Rights Commission sets aside funds each year to attend this event and Liaison Hoy requested that members interested in attending should contact her for a ticket.

**IX. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.