



One City for All People

Full Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 2, 2021, 4:00-5:30pm

Howard Office Building

Sonny West Auditorium

700 2nd Ave S, Nashville, TN 37210

The mission of the Metro Human Relations Commission is to protect and promote the personal dignity, peace, safety, security, health, and general welfare of all people in Nashville and Davidson County.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** MHRC Chair, Rev. Davie Tucker

The meeting was called to order at 4:04p.

Commissioners in Attendance: *Maryam Abolfazli, Deaconess Garlinda Burton, Pratik Dash, Issa Y. Mohamed, Lethia Mann, Marisa Richmond, Linda Robinson, Ariel Safdie, Dr. Ben Tran, Davie Tucker, Irwin Venick, Joshua Wood, Chuck Yezbak*

Commissioners Not in Attendance: *Jeremy Davis, Paula Martinez, Jorge Salles Diaz, Nancy Youssef*

Others in Attendance: *Barbara Gunn-Lartey, Rachel Novak, Liz Orozco, Matthew Garth (Metro Legal, on behalf of Derrick Smith)*

Board Chair Tucker acknowledged **Board Chair emeritus Comm. Marisa Richmond** for her leadership, vision and excellence. He also expressed his gratitude for the honor of serving as the Board Chair and reviewed the mission and vision of MHRC.

He noted that **E.D. Mel Fowler-Green** is unable to attend today's meeting.

2. **CONFIRM QUOROM** (Share regrets from Commissioners not in attendance; introduce guests)

- A quorum was achieved at meeting's inception.
- **Chair Tucker** acknowledged our newest Commissioner: **Jorge Salles Diaz**

3. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Comm. Richmond moved to approve the minutes. **Comm. Dash** seconded. The minutes were approved and will be published on the MHRC website.

4. **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

- **The budget for Metro FY 22 has just begun. There is no new Financial Update.**
- **Chair Tucker** asked the Commission to advocate for an increased budget which will enable MHRC to enhance its work. In addition, he requested Commissioners to express perspectives

for Fiscal Year 2022, particularly regarding public safety and affordable housing.

- **Comm. Venick** encouraged MHRC to follow up on its previously adopted resolution that Metro implements an equity lens process for assessing budget allocations.
 - **Comm. Tucker** requested that the equity lens be sent to the Commissioners.
 - **Comm. Venick** noted that the most current budget resources have recently been added to the budget. He also suggested substantive discussions with key stakeholders, including Vice Mayor Jim Shulman, Judge Rachel Bell, Sara Figal, and a representative from Metro Council.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- **Recommendation for full board related to complaint filed by NAACP Nashville Branch**
 - The Executive Committee recommended to the Full Board that MHRC coordinate and facilitate public forums to address four priority issues:
 - Evictions
 - Affordable housing
 - Policing and public safety
 - Budget allocations
 - **Comm. Abolfazli** added that these discussions would be scheduled to segue to the Mayor's budget process.
 - **Comm. Dash** inquired about the Commission's subpoena power. Mr. Garth will research this inquiry and provide feedback. **Chair Tucker** requested that this information be submitted to **E.D. Fowler-Green** before the next Commission meeting so that she can disseminate to all the Commissioners.
 - **Comm. Burton** asked about sequencing the priority issues, offering that in direct response to the NAACP's letter, policing and public safety should be prioritized as the initial issue.
 - *Significant discussion ensued regarding an appropriate response – with impact – to the NAACP letter, and the four priority issues- evictions, affordable housing, police and public safety, and the budget.*
 - **Chair Tucker** emphasized that MHRC proceed in collaboration with the Community Oversight Board for public conversations regarding policing and public safety.
 - **Chair Tucker** requested a motion for a written response the NAACP letter. **Comm. Dash** moved; **Comm. Tran** seconded; the Full Board approved and adopted the motion. A draft will be co-created with **E.D. Fowler-Green** and circulated among the Commissioners for review.
 - **Comm. Richmond** moved to address public safety with four monthly public forums that discuss evictions; policing and public safety; affordable housing; and the budget. **Comm. Dash** seconded. The Full Board approved and adopted the motion.

These meetings will be publicly noticed.
- **Transgender-Inclusive Health Benefits**
 - **Liz Orozco, Director of Policy and Research**, updated the Commission, noting that a draft of this policy document is being prepared to present to the Benefits Board by late Fall after review and feedback from Human Resources.
 - **Comm. Richmond** reiterated her previous objections to a specific reference in the draft which, based on the policy implemented in Memphis, TN, requires that a supervisor approve the right for staff to exercise these benefits. Liz responded that the draft she is

preparing will be inspired by legislation implemented in Atlanta, GA, and Austin, TX – but not Memphis.

- **Comm. Richmond** will continue to advocate on behalf of MHRC.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- **New Business to be determined.**
 - **Comm. Richmond** requested clarification from Mr. Garth regarding Gov. Lee’s announcement to renew provisions of the Executive Order regarding increased COVID levels. Mr. Garth will review and follow-up with the Commission.

7. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

There was no Director’s Report for this meeting.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Sentiment of Appreciation from MHRC Staff to Commissioners:** *You may have noticed the candle in the room. This light reflects the light that you, as Commissioners, bring to this space in the form of your vision, expertise, advocacy, and passion to promote and protect the personal dignity of all people in Nashville and Davidson County.*
- **Comm. Venick** acknowledged **Comm. Abolfazli’s** column in *The Tennessean*
- **Comm. Venick** announced a living wage certification training for businesses at the Labor Day Picnic, hosted by SEIU, on September 4, 2021. For more information contact the coordinators at info@nashvillelivingwage.com.
- **Comm. Dash** announced that on Saturday, August 21, 2021, TIRRC (Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition) is sponsoring a Welcome Home Community Party. This event will be family-focused and COVID compliant.
- **New Commissioner Binders** – Commissioner Venick requested updated binders for all Commissioners
- **MNPD Resource Guide** – the materials from the MNPD Diversity Training were available for Commissioners. **Chair Tucker** referred Commissioners to **Barbara Gunn Lartey** for more information regarding future trainings.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04pm.

10. RECORDING OF THIS MEETING:

<https://youtu.be/TBuyW66pvNc>

Appeal of Decisions From the Metro Human Relations Commission

If you are not satisfied with a decision of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, you may appeal the decision by petitioning for a writ of certiorari with the Davidson County Chancery or Circuit Court. Your appeal must be filed within 60 days of the date of the entry of the Human Relations Commission’s decision. We advise that you seek your own independent legal advice to ensure that your appeal is filed in a timely manner and that all procedural requirements have been met.



If any accommodations are needed for individuals with disabilities who wish to be present at the meeting, please contact MHRC at 615-880-3374 or MHRC@nashville.gov. Requests should be made as soon as possible but at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting in order for the entity to provide such needed aid or service.