



One City for All People

Full Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 1, 4:00-5:30pm

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.

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** MHRC First Vice-Chair, Dr. Marisa Richmond

This meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

Commissioners in Attendance: *Maryam Abolfazli, Samar Ali, Jeremy Davis, Jeff Gibson, Lethia Mann, Oscar Miller, Issa Y. Mohamed, Kobie Pretorius, Erin Pryor, Marisa Richmond, Janice Rodriguez, Davie Tucker, Irwin Venick, Chuck Yezbak*

Commissioners Not in Attendance: *Paula Martinez, Linda Robinson*

Others in Attendance: *Barbara Gunn-Lartey, Mel-Fowler-Green, Sarah Imran, Judy Tackett (Director of the Homelessness Planning Council), Derrick Smith (Metro Legal), Metro ITS staff*

II. **CONFIRM QUORUM** (Share regrets from Commissioners not in attendance; introduce guests)

A quorum was achieved.

III. Approval to Conduct Meeting by Electronic Means (motion)

Comm. Venick moved that the items on the Meeting Agenda constitute essential business of the board and that the meeting shall proceed electronically as necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare of all Tennesseans considering the COVID-19 outbreak and any Rule that conflicts with the Governor's Executive Order 16 not permitting electronic meetings be suspended.

Comm. Davis seconded the Motion. This motion was unanimously adopted by verbal vote of Commissioners.

IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of March 2, 2020, Minutes: Motion to approve: **Comm. Miller. Comm. Venick.** seconded. March Minutes were approved by Commissioners' verbal vote. **Comm. Dash** abstained because he was not on the Commission at the time.

March Minutes were approved by Commissioners' verbal vote.

Approval of May 21, 2020, Minutes: **Comm. Pratik** moved to approve. **Comm. Davis** seconded. May Minutes were approved by Commissioners' verbal vote.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- Continued Discussion of COVID-19 response policies on vulnerable communities in Nashville
 - **E.D. Fowler-Green** reviewed policy recommendations regarding data sharing, particularly as this practice relates to the homeless and other vulnerable community and the criminalization of residents testing positive. These concerns were discussed with the Mayor's Office, particularly Mary Falls.
 - **E.D. Fowler-Green** also raised concerns regarding residents housed at the Fairgrounds, including the conditions as they impact the Trans / Non-Gender conforming communities.
 - **Comm. Dash** noted that 175 Antioch residents tested positive for COVID-19 and feel betrayed when they learned that their diagnosis would be shared with first responders, including MNPD. He suggested a more concerted effort for transparency and a recommendation to revoke data sharing policy.
 - **Mel Fowler-Green** responded that regarding transparency, while there is currently no MOU among MNHD and first responders, one is being explored. The wisdom of the policy and the attendant disincentive for vulnerable to get tests remains a concern.
 - **Comm. Tucker** expressed concern that data sharing is overreach. **Comm. Richmond** agreed. She questioned the validity of sharing a resident's diagnosis, particularly if there is the risk of criminalizing the diagnosis. **Comm. Pryor** concurred.
 - **Comm. Abolfazli** inquired if there is a consolidated, centralized repository of information regarding the impact of COVID-19, the tornado and social justice concerns
 - **Comm. Ali** responded that Dr. Cornelia Graves at St. Thomas Hospital has been conducting the research raised by **Comm. Abolfazli**. **Comm. Ali** added that the community's issue with trust as a pivotal issue, particularly regarding law enforcement. **Comm. Pryor** inserted that the quality of information – is it accurate? Is it relevant? – underscores the trust factor.
 - **Comm. Venick** discussed the impact of informed consent.
 - **Comm. Pretorius** asked if first responders have sufficient PPE. **Comm. Tucker** responded that the underlying problem regarding data sharing is less likely a result of PPE and more of an issued of overreach **Comm. Dash** agreed – first responders should have PPE as a matter of standard operating procedure.
 - **E.D. Fowler-Green** requested direction for addressing the data sharing issue.
 - * **Comm. Dash** moved to create a resolution to support the resolution that was filed by

Council Member Sledge that requests the Metro Health Department to cease its practice of distributing positioning COVID-19 tests to first responders. **Comm. Pryor** seconded.

* **Comm. Venick** offered to amend the proposed motion to include that Metro to provide the appropriate additional PPE to Metro first responders. **Comm. Pryor** seconded the amendment.

- **Comm. Gibson** requested clarification on the original motion and amendments. After reviewing the original motion and amendments, Commissioners:

* **Comm. Venick** restated his amendment. **Comm. Pryor** seconded. The amendment was unanimously passed by voice vote.

* **Comm. Dash** restated his motion with the aforementioned PPE amendment. **Comm. Pryor** seconded. The motion unanimously carried by voice vote.

- **-Response to Fairgrounds – Chair Janice Rodriguez**

- **Chair Rodriguez** shared that she and **Comm. Pretorius** toured the Fairgrounds. She reported that while the facilities are modest, there were no alarming observations. Although there are Wi-Fi connections that are no computers for residents to look for jobs.
- **Comm. Pretorius** said that Marcel, the Fairgrounds administrator from Social Services, expressed a need for more masks and for clothing – particularly men’s clothing suitable for job interviews.
- Residents who could provide an address were free to leave.
- A Transgender woman was reassured that accommodations would be made to ensure safety. In response to **Comm. Pryor’s** inquiry regarding the Trans resident who left the Fairgrounds, **E.D. Fowler-Green** confirmed that though she was asked to leave the Fairgrounds for a perceived disciplinary matter, she volitionally left the state. **Comm. Richmond** clarified that the resident briefly relocated to a residence on 8th Avenue before returning to her home state of Iowa.
- **Comm. Venick** described concerns whether the Fairgrounds facilities would be considered a congregant facility and if so would not be considered with that national best practices.
- **Judith Tackett** shared resources regarding homelessness and COVID-19. She referenced this information, noting that congregant facilities are considered acceptable during this pandemic as long as certain precautions are taken, including quarantining, physical safety, etc.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- **Response to Current Social Justice Climate, – Amended Item to New Business**

- **Comm. Abolfazli** asked if the Commission, before this meeting ends, can address the social justice protests in the aftermath of the police-involved killing of George Floyd.
- **Comm. Tucker** made a statement that was adopted in full by the Commission:

I appreciate the opportunity that we get to at least discuss this. And just by the way that we meet and all that goes on, so often it's hard for us to stay up on top of a situation. And

oftentimes, our response is well after the train has left the station. My sense is this is a watershed moment, not only in this country, but particularly for Nashville. I was repulsed and insulted by Chief Anderson and Mayor Cooper's letters sending their thoughts and hope up north. We have a clear five-year easily documentable public police problem.

There have been demands that have been laid at the table, clear, reasonable civic demands: The changing of training, putting in review of officers, such as Lippert, who had eight incidences of use of force and suspensions before he killed the guy over in Cayce. We have a police chief who's been in a department for 40 years. There's a total lack of trust. The community voted for community oversight and just as two weeks ago an individual was shot in the leg, and they did not notify the Civilian Oversight Board. The board members and the director will express to you right now today their continued frustrations with dealing with the police department.

The people have spoken. All we want -- all we want justice and rightness, but the mayor is having a prayer vigil for peace and unity. Anytime for me, and I'm speaking out on my faith tradition, that the King says unity, it's always acquiescence to the status quo. The people's expressions are not unreasonable. We have to be full throated and reassert as we have in the past for this moment right here. Minneapolis? Nashville is Minneapolis, don't let nobody fool you. What if Andrew Delke gets exonerated? What, we're going to get together these same people to pray for peace? There are two adjectives or two verbs that have to accompany peace for me to make sense of what you're talking about. Peacekeepers, stays silent; peacekeepers, acquiesce. Peacemakers go through sometimes the turmoil and the chaos of creating a sustainable peace.

We have allowed ourselves to clearly show that we're more concerned with property, loss of property, than the restriction of liberty and the loss of life. My heart hurts. I have been in a state of flux as we try to reach out and make connections that this is an opportunity for Nashville to lead the way. The issues are already on the table. They have not gone away, but we act like our heads are in the sand to where my frustration is having to remind people: You weren't here for the last five years? You want to cry for George Floyd's momma? I heard Ms. Lee on Saturday.

I believe, and again I know that this is a board, and I try to work anywhere I can to do what I can, but for me this is one of those times where a full-throated -- if this is the cover that the city needs to use to finally make some systemic changes in our own policing problems or we'll be back here again. When even in this first situation, they're not even clear the guy -- it appears that the guy may have accidentally shot the Taser and he slipped and fell in the gravel. They guy never came at it him. Then the guy ends up getting shot in the leg. And when the warrant was taken out, they did not even record that he was shot in the incident.

You may think, well, what does that matter? It matters a lot when you show up in court. It matters a whole lot. I am going to shut up, but this is a moment. This is a moment. We don't

have to talk about what's wrong here in Nashville. We got three reports -- Department of Justice, Driving While Black -- and a city-paid-for Policing Project. Nashville has never even apologized for the harm caused to the community and its over policing. My heart is heavy. It costs sometimes to do the right thing. If you are concerned about Minneapolis, don't act like you haven't been in Nashville for the last five years. We are the Minneapolis.

And I'm going to do to whatever level your own comfort is to speak to this moment right now, not wait till next month and come out with something; right now. The pain, the frustration for people who have no language. I've been asked by the media, and no one's printed anything I've said, because there are enough talking heads about the violence. Because when you march through downtown, and long as you don't tear up shit, life goes back to normal. But the minute something happens we want to turn our attention to the violence and never thought about why people were marching. They were marching because their hearts join with Minneapolis. Their hearts join with Dallas. Their heart joins LA. It joins with New York. It joins with Florida. It joins.

Policing is a problem for black and brown people. We have -- the chief said months ago, we're not going to do body cameras. We run to the mayor. The mayor issues a statement. No, we are going to do body cameras. COVID shows up in town. The mayor says, we're not going to do body cameras. You know what the community heard? Chief already said that. Chief said that months ago that we're not going to have body cameras.

Now the mayor has Amen'd the chief, and we're not going to have body cameras. And we're going to hide behind COVID. The chief never wanted to COB. There's work even now. As of last week, does not -- but the people voted for that. So we can write some nice political rhetoric to state our claim, but I have buried people. I have to look at families. For a man who is dying and asked to breathe, and he calls for his mother. I've experienced trauma on my spirit. And nicety, talking nice, political appropriate talk for me, won't calm my spirit. Thank you.

* This official statement from MHRC can be accessed and shared through these links:

[Metro Nashville Network \(YouTube\)](#)

[Mp3 audio only](#) (can also be downloaded there)

[Mp4 video/audio](#) (can also be downloaded there)

A sign language version can also be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oT3-AVakUo&feature=youtu.be>

Comm. Yezbak: Reiterated his concurrence with Commission for bodycams.

VII. **Officer election for Executive Board** – Action required

- The following Commissioners agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee:

* **Comm. Maryam Abolfazli**

* **Comm. Jeff Gibson**

* **Comm. Kobie Pretorius**

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This report is attached hereto.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

X. ADJOURN

Comm. Dash moved to adjourn. **Comm. Pryor** seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 5:59p.

MHRC Priorities

Racial/Social Inequity

Affordable and Fair Housing

Law Enforcement/Policing

Title VI

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.

June 2020-- MHRC Director's Report

Ongoing Projects and Programs

Project	Comments	Relevant Dates
Sharepoint Site	We are launching our Sharepoint site for the Commission. This will allow us to maintain a shared calendar and to share documents with you. You will receive an invitation in the next week.	In Process
Nashville Rising	The Nashville Rising Coalition was successful in getting the "Community Covenant" passed unanimously in Metro Council. Now we will continue to work with our partners in operationalizing the commitments in the covenant. Of greatest interest is the adoption if an equity lens for city budgeting and performance measurement. This is in line with your recent policy recommendation related to performance metrics.	On-going
Maddox Diversity Equity & Inclusion Taskforce	Sarah is serving on the Dan and Margaret Maddox Foundation's Equity taskforce, to participate in developing a strategy for the organization to implement DEI practices.	Yearlong project
Title VI	In the next few months we will update our website and make a simple training video for new employees for use by department Title VI Coordinators. We will also create some information to share with residents about their Title VI rights. We are working with an intern on this project from June 15-August 31	September launch
IncluCivics	The IncluCivics platform is up and running again. Our partners at Code for Nashville have recommitted to the project and are working to update it now. You can visit the page at: www.codefornashville.org/inclucivics . Work on the 5-year update to the original IncluCivics report is near completion. We have a draft and expect the report to be published in about three weeks.	Ongoing June 20, 2020
State of Black Nashville	Collaborative initiative with various community stakeholders to address the well-being and quality of life for the Black community in Nashville. This project has been on hold for a few months during the pandemic.	Ongoing
Commissioner Spotlight	Marketing project introducing each Commissioner on website, in social media and newsletters.	Ongoing
Consumer Protection Initiative	Funded by a grant managed through the Mayor's Office. We have been asked to take the lead. The remaining funds in the grant can pay for a fellow to do most of the work. I will look at	June-October

	the grant terms, the current state of the project, and determine if we can lead.	
Inclusive Health Insurance Policy for Metro	Comm. Marisa Richmond and M. Fowler-Green are working with the Mayor's Office and Metro Human Resources on policy recommendations for improvements to the health insurance plan. The goal is to ensure that the plan is inclusive of all health needs of transgender employees and family members.	Ongoing

Events / Trainings

<i>Event</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Relevant Dates</i>
Mobile Diversity Seminar	Sponsor / Facilitator	July 27
CNM Equity Workshop	Lead trainers	July 23

NEXT MEETING: July 6 (in person unless Governor's Executive Order 16 is continued)

***Note – I will be on vacation June 8-17**