

Human Rights Commission Meeting, June 25, 2025

Attendees

1. Anne Day Leong, Commissioner	6. Rachel Blomquist, Commissioner
2. Delores Scott, Staff Liaison	7. Rebecca Murphy, Co-Chair
3. Dominic Russoli, Commissioner	8. Sarabjeet Saluja Bhutani, Commissioner
4. Jacob Goodman, Commissioner	9. Sirrah Jah, Commissioner
5. Florence Jewell, Commissioner	10. Zachary Huebschman, Vice Chair

Absent – Gabrielle Zwi, Co-Chair

Minutes

The Commissioners approved the minutes and agenda for the meeting.

Staff Report/Presentation: Gender-Affirming Healthcare and the Maryland Trans

Shield Act. The Staff Liaison delivered a presentation on Gender-Affirming Healthcare and the Maryland Trans Shield Act. The presentation included the response of the Office of the City Attorney to the HRC. Specifically, in its request to the Office of the City Attorney, the HRC asked the following:

- Are there any other existing State/County protections other than the Maryland Trans Shield Act (MTSA)?
- Are there Any ongoing efforts to identify gaps and strengthen existing protections?
- Has an assessment of the impacts of potential federal policies been done?

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Commissioners asked:

- Hypothetically speaking, if a youth travels from West Virginia to seek gender affirming care in the city of Rockville, goes back to West Virginia and the West Virginia state police reach out to Rockville City Police Department to ask for certain information, do we have a policy in place where the police will refuse to engage with that request?
- Can we have a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the Police Department regarding how they should handle an out-of-state request—in compliance with Maryland law?
- As an alternative to the MOU, would the Police Department be amenable to providing a memo to the officers regarding their role when they receive an out-of-state request?

- Is it possible to amend the Rockville HRC or the human rights chapter to include similar language of what would often be referred to as a sanctuary city statute for immigration purposes—so that it is codified?
- For the next steps, can the City provide us with an understanding of the existing protections for practitioners so that the HRC can be a resource of information?
- Would the city be more amenable to an internal memo from the police department in lieu of the MOU.

Co-Chairs Report

The Co-Chairs and Vice Chair accepted the Pride Proclamation at Rockville Pride and at the Mayor and City Council meeting. Co-Chair Murphy encouraged the other Commissioners to also participate in the Proclamation process, saying “It’s a fun way to engage in the process. There are photo ops, you meet others and have an opportunity to speak.”

Rockville Pride 2025

The Vice Chair and Co-Chair Murphy gave huge thanks to Commissioner Blomquist and Co-Chair Zwi for their leadership in the planning and execution of Pride. It was an excellent event with a strong turnout. The Pride retrospective meeting will be scheduled.

Restructuring the Subcommittees

Vice Chair Huebschman reported out on the reorganization of the subcommittees.

- The Public Policy Subcommittee will encompass a wide range of different issues and topics that relates to human rights.
- There is a Steering Subcommittee, which is essentially just a monthly opportunity for members to engage with either the co-chairs or vice co-chair and will also focus on our Student Ambassador program.
- The Disability Justice Subcommittee.
- The Human Rights City subcommittee will essentially be a manager—a chapter rewrite.
- Each chapter rewrite will be merged into Public Policy.
- We will have two separate events committees, which will be our MLK day and Pride events subcommittees.
- We need to decide what members will be on each subcommittee. Obviously, it would be ideal to have more than two people or potentially three or more on each subcommittee.
- It seems unfair to have just one person pulling all the weight. To that point, are we all going to just put our names in or how does the process work? Do we assign someone?
- What are the criteria for these subcommittees? Do you need a background in public policy to work for the Public Policy Committee?
- You absolutely do not need a background. You were appointed by the Mayor and Council because you have relevant experience, professionally or other relevant life

experience. So that's really the only qualification you need to participate on any of the subcommittees.

- Each one of these subcommittees exists because at least one person on the Commission has basically said, I want this to exist. We take a de facto approach.
- Our membership is entirely voluntary. We don't really conscript people to subcommittees. This is volunteer work. It's supposed to be fun.
- If there's a subcommittee that doesn't have enough support, leadership can step in to fill the gaps to make sure that all of you have the support you need. If you need to step back from a committee for two or three months, do not hesitate to do that. We don't want you to get burned out.
- We would much rather you have you as a happy commissioner for your full term than have you feeling like you have to do everything and get burned out in the process.
- Ideally, we would like you to sign up for at least one subcommittee.
- A link was shared so people can type in their names. We are keeping a running roster.

Other Committee and Liaison Reports – Annual Report

- In our previous meeting, we also went through the annual report process where each year we give a report on the activities of the Human Rights Commission.
- Moving forward, starting in March or April, we will look to the subcommittees to draft their portions of the report.
- We will send you the document in an email and provide a link to the Google Doc site.

Meeting Adjourned.