Town of Boone Human Relation Commission Meeting: September 17, 2025

Members Present: Todd Carter, Kirstin Morgan, Drew Finley, Sean Morris, Alex Castillo, Tori Rodriguez

- Meeting began at 6:06pm
    - All members present in person except for Trevor Moody, Joanne Pullati, Dalton George, and Jack Yordy, all of whom were absent
    - Alex Castillo was present as a non-voting member as he has not been sworn in yet

- Moment of silence observed

- Tentative agenda adopted
    - Kirstin Morgan motioned to adopt
    - Sean Morris seconded
    - Vote: approve 5, against 0, abstentions 0

- HRC vacancies announcement by Todd Carter
    - Alex Castillo welcomed as newest member of the commission, introductions of all present members
    - 2 vacancies remain

- Opened for public comment at 6:15
    - Closed at 6:15 as no members of the public present

- Approval of July 16, 2025 minutes
    - Move to approve minutes by Drew Finley
    - Seconded by Tori Rodriguez
    - Vote: approve 5, against 0, abstentions 0

- Online complaint form and HRC webpage
    - Need to set a timeline for Drew Finley to get together with Nicole Harmon to solidify what HRC wants regarding complaint form and HRC webpage
        - Start with complain form and then Tori Rodriguez can present examples of how whole webpage will look
    - Drew Finley will meet with Nicole Harmon to get form as approved by HRC and Town Council on the website and then Town will publicize
        - Complaints will go to Nicole Harmon, who will send to Chair of Commission Todd Carter who will add it to next HRC agenda
    - Kirstin Morgan asked if we would have to identify the person who made the complaint during a public HRC meeting, as that could discourage people from reporting
        - Sean Morris expressed the concern that we would be lacking propriety and not modeling open government if we do not share the name of the person making

the complaint since to speak at a Town Council or Commission meeting you have to give your name and where you live
        - Kirstin Morgan agreed with the above concern, but also stated that people may be discouraged from reporting if they fear retaliation
        - Todd Carter said he is not sure what the rules are and when we get the first complaint we will have to ask the town attorney and reach out to the state for guidance
            - He added that it could be assigned to 2 members of the HRC to investigate before the meeting and talk with the person making the complaint
        - Drew Finley asked if we could add something to the form that says the person's name will only be used to contact them
            - Todd Carter says that will be part of our education piece once the form goes up and pulled up Durham's website as an example where they separate fair housing and all other non-discrimination ordinance issues
            - Durham did require name, address, and phone number, but had no details on how that information would be used
    - Tori Rodriguez shared her draft for the HRC website
        - Provides a lot more information including Commission powers and by-laws
        - Also proposed having links to information on past and future events
            - Or if links to linked sites aren't an option, then have details on the page
        - Information about fair housing and the non-discrimination ordinance
        - Link to complaint forms (see below about use of two links to organize complaints)
    - The discussion returned to Durham's two different forms
        - Todd Carter highlighted the advantage of potentially having two portals to the same form to divide up complaints into fair housing and then equal employment opportunity and public accommodations
        - All commission members agreed that adding examples of complaints would be an excellent idea
    - Final consensus was that Tori Rodriguez and Drew Finley would meet with Nicole Harmon together to get everything moving on the complaint form and website

- Disability Pride Event – report by Sean Morris
    - Sean Morris- "it happened"
    - Goal was 50 participants and 33 came through, so a bit short
        - Also considered should have done music instead of PBS documentaries in background
    - Did form a good relationship with Watauga Opportunities and they will bring more people next year to the event
        - WO want to partner with HRC during the holidays for a fundraiser
    - Leftover supplies are all opened and non-returnable – cups, plates, art supplies

        - Budget was $940 and spent $711.86, so $228.14 returned to town budget
    - Sean Morris felt the excitement level was high and people enjoyed the event
        - Todd Carter and Tori Rodriguez echoed the success of the event
        - Mom and son drove from Winsto-Salem because this event was the only one for Disability Pride Month they could find even remotely close
    - Spirit Ride – nonprofit wants to be involved next year
        - They have connections to kids with disabilities and their families
    - Consensus to make sure all future HRC events have pictures taken as there were not any taken of this event

- Learn How Local Government Works event update
    - Planning got delayed, but looking at last full weekend of October (25th) or second weekend of November (8th)
        - 1-4pm
    - HRC email vote – details to Todd Carter and he sends to commission for vote
    - Need to get budget request to Town Council by Oct. 3 for space, supplies, and food
        - Approve at Town Council Meeting on Oct. 8

- Work Session
    - Tori Rodriguez brought up partnering with App Theater for Aids Visibility Month which Trevor Moody had brought up last month
        - It is October, so Kirstin Morgan pointed out would need to get with App Theater ASAP about getting on their calendar
        - Todd Carter stated that it costs $600 to sponsor a film there
    - Todd Carter brought up the potential elimination of the Human Relations Commission in NC due to federal changes
        - April 2026 Civil Rights and Fair Housing Summit – Mr. Troy sent an email about it, so Todd Carter will find out what is going on
        - None of us were able to be on the call about the potential elimination of the department
    - State HRC provided dates for some events coming up – Sean Morris shared
        - Signing of Hate Crimes Law Oct. 28
            - Tori Rodriguez and Sean Morris will work on this proclamation
        - Breast Cancer Awareness Month- Oct.
            - Kirstin Morgan will create proclamation for Town to pass
        - Hispanic Heritage Month Sept. 15-Oct. 15
            - Todd Carter brought up a proclamation and it was passed by Town Council
        - Domestic Violence Awareness Month – Oct.
            - Oct. 23 is wear purple day for DV awareness
            - Alex Castillo will work on proclamation since Oasis usually does one
        - Indigenous Americans Heritage Month – Nov.
            - Todd Carter is happy to bring forth a proclamation for this

    - Next Town Council meeting is Oct. 15, so any proclamations would be read into the record on the 27th
        - Send to Todd Carter to look over before officially submitting

- Meeting adjourned at 7:pm
    - Kirstin Morgan motioned to adjourn
    - Sean Morris seconded
    - Vote to adjourn unanimous