

**Pittsfield Human Rights Commission**  
**Minutes – May 15, 2019**  
**7:15 PM, Room 203**  
**Pittsfield City Hall, 70 Allen St., Pittsfield, MA**

**Members Present:** Drew Herzig, Chair  
Jessica Christensen  
Marietta Rapetti Cawse  
Jay Lopez  
Robert Sykes  
Christine Codella, Clerk

**Members Absent:** Sopheap Nhim, Peter Marchetti

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Drew Herzig called the meeting to order and notified all those in attendance that pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30A, Section 20, all attendees are hereby informed that a video and audio recording is being made of this meeting.
2. **Roll Call of HRC Members** – Drew Herzig announced the roll call of members present.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made by Marietta Rapetti Cawse to approve the April 8<sup>th</sup> 2019 minutes. Seconded by Jessica Christensen, approved unanimously.
4. **Public Comment** – There was no comment from members of the public.
5. **Unfinished Business** – There was a lengthy discussion on the mission, responsibility and function of the HRC. Jessica Christensen suggested delving further into topics, past and present, that are discussed in the meetings. Robert Sykes suggested we take our meetings to other venues within the community; however, it was noted by Drew Herzig that because these are subject to Massachusetts Open Meeting laws, the meeting locations need to be handicapped accessible and approved by the city of Pittsfield. Going off-site would also make the recording and televising of HRC meetings problematic, and therefore, might not be viable. Marietta Rapetti Cawse suggested representatives of several commissions get together for a public meeting to introduce themselves and discuss each other's missions. Drew Herzig noted that any time the commission adopts a resolution, it is important to note who opposes and who agreed.

There was a discussion about the definition of Human Rights and how the city charter can define it in a more positive language. Jay Lopez offered to draft new suggested language and he will present it to the commission.

Drew Herzig noted that there needs to be a call for more volunteers for the HRC. Also, there was a consensus that the HRC would invite Michele Benjamin and Catherine Van Bramer to the June meeting to discuss adding a disclaimer on applications for volunteer commissions stating that per Massachusetts state law, personal information of members is public information.

It was suggested that no election of officers will take place until all members are present. A motion was made by Marietta Rapetti Cawse that the election of officers be deferred to either June or July when all members are present. Motion seconded by Jay Lopez. Approved unanimously.

6. **New Business** – A motion was made by Jay Lopez to approve HRC's participation in the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service City/SPIRIT program, involving sending one or more representatives of the HRC to their meetings. Seconded by Robert Sykes, approved unanimously.
7. **Reports of Commissioners** – Marietta Rapetti Cawse continues to reach out to officials involved in the Tyler Street revitalization for a representative attend one of our future meetings.
8. Our next meeting will be Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6 pm.

A motion to adjourn was made by Jay Lopez, seconded by Robert Sykes. Approved unanimously.