

**MEETING OF THE MONROE COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Wednesday, July 25, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call and Call to Order:
Members present were: Byron Bangert, Doris Parlette, Eric Sader, Kathleen Sideli, Sue Wanzer, and Paul White.
Staff present: Margie Rice, County Attorney.
2. New Member and Introductions:
The Commission welcomed new Commission member, Sue Wanzer, and introductions were made.
3. The Commission approved the minutes from the June 27th, 2018 meeting, with a correction that Byron was in attendance at the June meeting.
4. The Commissioners discussed the upcoming Fourth of July Parade, the bracelets and impermanent tattoos that were going to be handed out by members. Members offered suggestions for how to handle the fact that the City of Bloomington's bracelets incorrectly listed the City's phone number. Ultimately, it was suggested that they be handed out "as is" because the County's phone number was correct and the County could direct any callers to the correct number at the City.
5. Byron discussed and explained the background of a letter written to Indiana Public Media by John Clower regarding the fact that many law enforcement agencies in our area were not following the current law regarding bias crime reporting. Many people do not even know the law exists, yet are encouraging the Indiana General Assembly to pass new legislation banning "hate crimes". Byron suggested a better approach would be for the existing law to be followed, first, so that everyone could be better informed before passing new legislation. There is a case to be made for enforcing existing legislation not enacting new legislation, with enhanced penalties which is something Byron does not support. Byron said he and John met with Judge Stephen Galvin to discuss the letter and that many other agencies have shown support for the letter, including the NAACP and the Monroe County Religious Leaders.

A version of John's letter amended by Margie Rice and placed on HRC letterhead was discussed. Eric suggested sending a letter to agencies before sending a letter to Indiana Public Media; however, Byron would be willing to sign John's letter now, as is. The Commission discussed Bloomington Police Department and Indiana University's current efforts to report bias crimes. Kathy said she knows IU reports bias crimes and wondered in the Correctional Center issues the HRC has been studying should be their first topic of concern, rather than bias crime reporting. Ultimately, the Commission agreed that someone should meet with the Monroe County Board of Commissioners in staff time to discuss the letter and keep them informed, prior to signing the letter. Byron felt strongly that enacting hate crime legislation is a hot topic at the State level and we don't have enough information to know what we are talking about – across the State – so he agreed to go to the Commissioners' meeting, then update the HRC.
6. Old Business was discussed, including New Leaf New Life's presentations, jail statistics, which may have been incorrect and/or misleading, and the topic overcrowding of the jail. The Commission agreed to have a quiet phase, with no guest speakers, to digest all the information they've received and determine their focus and next steps.
7. The meeting was adjourned.