



North Carolina Martin Luther King Jr. Commission

Tuesday, March 9 2021

10:00am – 12:30pm

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting with a Call in Option

(This meeting was recorded and said recording is available upon request.)

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Edwin E. Booth, James E. Williams Jr., Jamilla T. Hawkins, Nervahna R. Crew, Rodney E. Harris

Members Not Present: Allison Matthews, Carolyn Stroud, James Alfred White, JuanKerra Sanders, Kiana Rivers, Lucy H.F. Dinner, Rebecca Trammel, Walter Rogers

Government Staff Present: Betty Marrow-Taylor, Catherine Rivera, Bryan Brannon, Shanon Gerger

Others Present: Judge Ashleigh Parker Dunston

Welcome/Call to Order/Invocation

Chairman White welcomed the Commission members and shared that today will be about resetting and moving forward as a Commission. In light of this time, the Commission has a full agenda today, but they will begin the meeting with an Invocation. He gave his invocation.

Virtual Public Meeting Norms

Chairman White called on Catherine Rivera, Boards and Commission Coordinator, NC Department of Administration, to update the new Commission members on the virtual public meeting rules for North Carolina. Catherine greeted the Commission and shared the rules established last year from the state legislature due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The rules are the following:

- Notification – A proper notice shall be given in advance of the meeting and shall specify the means by which the public can access the remote meeting.
- Participation – All members of the public body who are attending the meeting and cannot be physically seen must identify themselves:
 - When the roll is taken, or the remote meeting is commenced.
 - Prior to participating in deliberations, including motions, amendments, and raising points of order.
 - Prior to voting.
- Documents – All documents to be considered during the remote meeting shall be provided to each member of the public body.
- Communication – The remote meeting shall allow for all members of the public body to do the following:
 - Hear what is said by other members of the public body.
 - Hear what is said by any individual addressing the public body.
 - To be heard by other members of the public body when speaking.
- Voting – All votes shall be conducted by roll call only, as mandated by NC G.S. 143-318.13.
- Recording of Minutes – The minutes shall reflect that the meeting was conducted remotely and should include members who were in attendance including when they joined or left the remote meeting.

- Public Record – All chats, instant messages, texts, or other written communications between members of the public body during the remote meeting are deemed public record.
- Conducting a Remote Meeting – The remote meeting must be simultaneously streamed live online so that live audio, and video, if any, is available to the public. If the remote meeting is conducted by conference call, the public body may comply by providing the public with an opportunity to dial in or stream the audio live and listen to the remote meeting.
- What constitutes a Quorum – A member of the public body shall be counted for purposes of quorum only during the period while simultaneous communication is maintained (If a member loses connection or leaves the remote meeting – they cannot be counted).

She also reminded the Commission members to be sure to keep themselves muted when they are not speaking to prevent feedback and distractions and encouraged everyone to

Ethics Statement

Chairman White read the Ethics Statement to the Commission.

Roll Call

Chairman White called on Catherine Rivera to give the roll call. A roll call was conducted and it was noted that a quorum was not present. There are still important topics to be discussed, thus it was decided to continue with the meeting but not vote on any items during this meeting.

I-9 Requirements

Chairman White called on Bryan Brannon, Chief Financial Officer, NC Department of Administration, to speak to the new Commission members about their I-9 requirements. Mr. Brannon greeted the Commission and introduced himself. He thanked the Commission for allowing him to speak today. The I-9 form is a form that verifies that the individual is a citizen of the United States. The Dept. of Administration needs to collect an I-9 form from all new members. Due to the pandemic, this will be done digitally through DocuSign. Someone from TempSolutions will be reaching out to the new members requesting the information that is needed. Everything is secure. Mr. Brannon shared that they need to fill it out because they are now deemed public official so they can now get certain things such as reimbursement. If they do want to get per diem, they will also need to fill out a W-9, which can also be filled out through OSHR.

Introductions

With new Commission members on the call, Chairman White asked for all Commission members present to introduce themselves, answering who they are, where they are from, and why they chose to serve on this Commission.

James Williams Jr. spoke first, sharing that he lives in Carrboro, NC but is from Northeastern NC. He chose to join the Commission because Dr. King was an influence in terms of who he is today and what he values. The more we appreciate who he was and what he stood for, the more we can get to the community that he wanted us to get to. He shared that he is a co-chair of the Orange County Remembrance Coalition and they are going to be doing a program in May in commemoration and celebration of the 1961 freedom rides.

Jamila Hawkins introduced herself next. She lives in Raleigh, NC but grew up in Columbus county. She is the daughter of farmers. She is excited about serving on this Commission because she wants to be part of a group of people who want to move the needle on equity and inclusion in the state. She works in the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office and has seen how the gap has widened over the past year.

Nervahna Crew introduced herself. She lives Raleigh, NC but is originally from Wilmington, Delaware. In 2018 she was elected to the Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors. When given the opportunity to serve on this Commission she was ecstatic. When she was a child she used to compete for her church public speaking contest and it was always based around Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Now we are in 2021 and the events of last year has really put Dr. King's teachings in the forefront of her mind. One of the quotes of his she shares a lot is "In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of

our friends.” We believe to have so many allies in what we are seeing and experiencing and then there is silence.

Rodney Harris, a new Commissioner, introduced himself next. Dr. Harris is a therapist and counselor educator that teaches virtually at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology in the Counselor Education Department to train future clinicians in how to work in BIPOC communities. One reason that he is proud to be here is that he is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the same fraternity that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a brother of. He also presently conducts racial trauma groups, which is both the most gratifying part of his life but also the most painful part of his life.

Edwin Booth, another new Commissioner, introduced himself next. He is from Washington, NC. He loves serving on this Commission because if never before the time is now to keep Dr. King’s dream alive. We need to let our young people know the importance of his legacy and know what the struggle is all about. He thanked everyone for allowing him to serve.

Swearing-In Ceremony

Chairman White greeted Judge Ashleigh Parker Dunston to conduct the swearing in ceremony for the new MLK Jr. Commission members. The swearing in was conducted for Commissioners Rodney E. Harris and Edwin E. Booth.

Functions and Duties and Charge for the Year

Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor spent a moment discussing some of the functions and duties of the Commission for the new Commission members. She also shared about the grants that the MLK Commission gives every year and her hopes for the Commission to do more in the wake of the events of the past year. Chairman White also shared his hopes of collaborating with other boards and commissions and other communities so that they can do things beyond of what they’ve done in the past.

MLK Grants

Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor asked Ms. Shanon Gerger to give an update on the MLK Grants. She is having an anticipated amount of contacting problems due to the pandemic and the grant cycle. She has sent out the grant contracts to the three grantees and in the process of the holiday and new year, a couple of them called and named that there were a couple of delays. She does have two grants in house and have gone through the cycle of leadership that needs to sign off on the contract itself and has sent them to fiscal for review and processing. She is still waiting to hear back from one of the foundations to get their signed contract back from them. She is hoping that they should have the other two paid out in the next few days.

Ms. Gerger noted that the Commission spoke at the last meeting the possibility of doing another grant cycle, so she brought up that if they want to do it they need to get it on the agenda for the next meeting soon.

Ms. Gerger took a moment to explain to Mr. Booth and Dr. Harris that the Commission usually rewards somewhere between three and five annual grants of about \$1,000 each year. The Commission sets a theme every year with goals they want agencies to accomplish as a result of the grant that is given. In October the Commission issues a funding opportunity announcement or a grant application and a press release is made as well announcing the grant with the theme. Thirty days are given for the application and from there the Commission gets together and determines which five applications they would like to sponsor for the year. From there Ms. Gerger draft the contract and tries to give it out by December. Due to COVID-19 there were delays and the timeline was a little off. Usually around April/June is when the theme begins to be discussed.

The Commission meeting paused for a ten-minute break.

Approvals

Due to the Commission not having a quorum, no voting was conducted at this meeting.

Open Discussion

Chairman White reminded the Commission that they want to engage all the different parts of North Carolina in their work. He shared that the Commission is responsible for three things:

1. To encourage appropriate ceremonies and activities throughout the state relating to the observance of the legal holiday honoring MLK Jr.'s Birthday
2. To provide assistance to local governments and private organizations across NC with respect to the observance of such holiday
3. To promote among the people of NC an awareness and appreciation of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Chairman White asked the Commission, "What are some of the themes that come out for the purpose of us as a Commission?" Mr. Williams shared that it seems to him that they have been focusing on just an aspect of what their mission should be. If they are to fulfill their true mission, there needs to be more of an effort to create an impact in a positive way to celebrate Dr. King's memory.

Dr. Harris shared that its great to hear that everyone is trying to get this into communities that really need it, and shared that a lot of people don't know how to write grants. He asked what the Commission could do to help people learn how to write grants.

Chairman White mentioned that he believes the Commission should collaborate more with other organizations to provide assistance across the state. He encouraged to think of organizations where this would be possible.

Ms. Crew interjected to share that everyone should think about people who have large networks that do not even know that they exist as a Commission. Internally, they need to start with the people they are in contact with every day. When we talk about doing things across the state, NC has 100 counties, and from those 100 counties she knows that there will be some that will never be in touch with us simply because they know the Commission doesn't exist.

Chairman White shared that they challenge they are facing is that people have a certain mental model of how to celebrate Dr. King based off of one day of the year, so it would take some work to move that mental model to go beyond just one day out of the year.

Announcements

Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor shared that the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force is meeting the next day and Governor Cooper will be speaking. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend.

Meeting Adjourned