

TOWN OF CHESTERTOWN
ORDINANCE ~~06-2020~~ 07-2020
ESTABLISHING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the Town Council adopted Resolution 03-2020 Black Lives Matter on October 5, 2020 recognizing that Chestertown has a documented history of overt and structural racism which was originally designed to prevent African Americans from equal access to housing, education, employment, recreation, dining and voting, and,

WHEREAS Chestertown residents, along with people from across the country and the world, have risen up to assert that Black Lives Matter here and everywhere and that Chestertown aspires to be a place of equality, understanding and inclusion in the creation of a more just and equitable future for everyone, and,

WHEREAS each human being deserves to live with dignity and respect and have equal opportunity in our Community,

BE IT THEREFOR RESOLVED THAT the Chestertown Mayor and Council:

1. Deeply apologize for the history of local slavery, the slave trade and the lives, the wealth and the freedoms that were stolen from enslaved people entering our port and our town.
2. Acknowledge and honor the positive contributions of African Americans in the creation and the endurance of Chestertown, Maryland.
3. Strongly affirm that all the citizens of Chestertown Maryland have equal rights, equal access to goods and services in our businesses, equal rights to be treated fairly by law enforcement and the criminal justice system, equal rights to start and maintain businesses, and equal access to housing and employment.
4. Proclaim that racism is a Human Rights issue.
5. Commit to establishing a Human Rights Commission to be empowered ~~as an independent board~~ with the task of gathering information for review, of analyzing data and of making necessary recommendations toward the effort of resolving allegations of

discrimination in employment, housing, education, recreation and others human relation areas by Town agencies and by businesses.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Chestertown Human Rights Commission be empowered to investigate and resolve allegations of racial discrimination in employment, housing, by town agencies and by businesses.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Human Rights Commission be established as follows:

MEMBERSHIP:

The Chestertown Human Rights Commission shall consist of seven residents of the Town of Chestertown, of which not less than four members shall be People of Color. Each member shall have demonstrated an interest and have acquired experience in matters relating to human rights concerns in the Town. Residents interested in serving shall apply by letter or email to the Commission Chair and Vice Chair, who will nominate Commission members to the Mayor and Town Council. All Commission members shall be approved and confirmed by the Town Council. Each member of the Commission shall serve for a term of three years, or until a successor is appointed and qualifies, commencing on July 1st in the year in which appointed. The Town Council shall designate the initial terms of the members of the Commission so that the terms of not more than three members expire in any one year.

RULES/DUTIES:

1. With the adoption of this Ordinance, the Town Council shall appoint an interim Chair and an interim Vice-Chair, who shall be responsible for nominating the initial seven Commission members. Upon the Council approval of the full Commission, its members shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among its membership, each of whom shall serve for one year.
2. The Commission may adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary and desirable for the regulation and conduct of its meetings and activities.

AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Commission is authorized to:

1. Conduct public meetings and survey current practices and conditions relating to the treatment of citizens in areas of public accommodations, employment, housing, recreation, education, and other human rights areas.
2. Conduct programs for the purpose of informing the public regarding matters of human rights and of bettering human rights within the community; Accept complaints relating to discrimination and refer the complaints to appropriate authorities.
3. Make recommendations to appropriate authorities and propose legislation regarding human rights practices and conditions.
4. Accept complaints relating to discrimination and refer the complaints to appropriate authorities.
5. Act as a mediator to resolve disagreements in matters of human rights if the parties so desire, or to refer to a local mediation group if the parties prefer.
6. Coordinate activities with and utilize the resources of other public and private human rights bodies.
7. Issue an annual report of its activities and on the status of the Town's racial justice and equity.
8. Perform other duties and functions as may be specified by the Town Council from time to time.

NOW, having been introduced this 5th day of October 2020, Ordinance 06-2020 can be adopted on ~~October 19~~ November 2, 2020 and will then become effective on November ~~9~~23, 2020.

Chris Cerino, Mayor

David Foster, Councilmember

Tom Herz, Councilmember

Ellsworth Tolliver, Councilmember

Meghan Efland, Councilmember

Witness:

W. S. Ingersoll, Town Manager