

Discussion summary, TRC meeting #2, held via Zoom, June 7, 2021

Ms. Stallworth called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. A roll call showed all members present: Raff Doneslon, Kendall Isaac, Tristan Milazzo, Andrew Razanauskas, Dorene Wilbur, Emily Kelahan (vice chair), and TaWanda Stallworth (chair). Also present were Sean Shultz, Borough Council Vice President; Jeff Stuby, Council Member; Joyce Stone, Borough Secretary, and Fred Baldwin. Ms. Stallworth introduced Mr. Baldwin, explaining that he will assist the TRC by providing short summaries of its electronically recorded public meetings.

Minutes of the TRC's initial meeting on May 25 were approved (by a unanimous voice vote taken at a later point in the meeting).

Mr. Shultz briefed Commission members on the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act (65 PA C.S.S, 701-706). He began with broad overview of the law, focusing on those parts most likely to be relevant to the work of the TRC. He noted that The Sunshine Act will definitely apply to all TRC deliberations that include four or more members. "Deliberations" includes discussions on pending decisions, whether or not a motion is on the floor. However, any two or three Commission members can talk freely among themselves because they will be unable to make decisions without consultation with other members. Mr. Shultz noted that there are a few exceptions to Sunshine Act requirements for public meetings. Where the TRC is concerned, the most important is likely to be a provision for purely "informational" briefings to help TRC members to understand some issues.

The discussion that followed clarified a few special issues. For example, must the TRC record minutes of executive sessions? Answer: No. It may also be necessary to consider on a case-by-case basis how the Sunshine Act applies to the process of gathering information from academic institutions and law enforcement agencies.

Other discussions considered various TRC procedural issues.

Is the TRC likely to want to invite guest speakers, such as community leaders? Answer: Yes.

Might invitees include elected officials—for example, Representative Barb Gleim? Answer: Possibly.

Should the TRC develop some form of standardized message to be sent to potential invitees that would clarify areas of TRC interest? Answer: Yes.

Should information on TRC priorities and procedures be put on the TRC website? Answer: Yes, distinguishing between substantive issues of interest and explanatory material on how the TRC expects to address those issues.

TRC members agreed that they should also post statements explaining their personal reasons for volunteering for TRC service. Ms. Wilbur agreed to develop a draft template for this.

Commission members discussed at some length how to define its leadership roles. Should the titles be “co-chairs” or “chair/vice chair”? Most comments favored the “co-chair” model, but it was noted that the public – and especially the news media – have a clear point of contact on any important issue. The final decision, based on a motion unanimously approved by voice vote, was to adopt the “co-chair model.” The Commission next voted unanimously to confirm the choice of Ms. Stallworth and Ms. Kelahan as co-chairs.

Other discussions focused on the role of committees and working groups. Members expressed strong interest in creating three-person working groups. Mr. Shultz cautioned that, even if a working groups authority is limited, Sunshine Act provisions are likely to apply to any group expected to produce recommendations for TRC action,.

Ms. Stallworth reminded TRC members that the TRC is expected to submit draft by-laws and a draft action plan to Borough Council by July 24. Comments from members indicated that draft by-laws can be completed soon but that the action plan will require more work. All members volunteered to assist in preparing one or the other of these two required documents.

Three TRC meetings were scheduled before that deadline. Dates are June 21, July 6 and July 19. All three meetings will begin at 6:00pm, using Zoom.

It was also agreed that the TRC should have a presence at both Juneteenth (June 19) and Unity Day (July 24) community celebrations. Since the TRC’s planning will not be far enough along to provide clear answers to questions, the TRC presence at these events should be limited to a “listening mode.” That is, those staffing a TRC table or booth should be prepared to invite and record questions and suggestions from the public, while avoiding guesswork about how the TRC will carry out its mission.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.