



**Henrietta Lacks Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 10, 2023 | 1:30 PM**

**ATTENDEES**

Senator William Stanley  
 Dr. Betty Adams  
 Kristy Johnson  
 William Claiborne  
 Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens  
 Danyell Duncan  
 Sandra Serna  
 Veronica Cosby  
 Sharmeka Williams  
 Jazmine Martinez  
 Tammy Smith  
 Joe Dashiell  
 Max Petrie

**AFFILIATION**

Member of Virginia Senate  
 Executive Director of Southern Virginia Higher Education Center  
 Executive Director of Halifax Industrial Development Authority  
 Designee of Chair of the Board, Halifax County Board of Supervisors  
 Member of Halifax County Industrial Development Authority  
 Designee of Mayor of South Boston, Town of South Boston, Clerk  
 Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Equity  
 Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Equity  
 Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Equity  
 Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Equity  
 Virginia Department of Health, Office of Communications  
 WDBJ7 Television, Senior Reporter

**Not In Attendance**

Delegate James Edmunds (resigned)	Member of the Virginia House of Delegates
Dr. Adele Newson-Horst	Board Member of Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group
Jeri Lacks-Whye	Member of Henrietta Lacks Family

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call to Order & Welcome	The Chair, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, called meeting of the Henrietta Lacks Commission, hereafter, "Commission", to order at 1:30 PM EST.	
Roll Call	A quorum was confirmed with five of eight members present.  Sharmeka Williams	
Introductions	Virginia Department of Health representatives, Sandra Serna, Veronica Cosby, and Sharmeka Williams, introduced themselves, including their roles at VDH.	

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Old Business:	Review of Meeting Minutes Bylaws Revisions Reports Facilitated by: Dr. Simon- Owens, Sandra Serna, and Kristy Johnson	
Review of Meeting Minutes	Dr. Simon- Owens requested a motion for approval of the draft minutes from the December 18, 2019, and October 14, 2022, meetings. The motion was made by Dr. Betty Adams and seconded by Mr. William B. Claiborne.	VDH will reformat draft minutes for final posting. VDH will post final minutes to Commonwealth Calendar and the VDH Commissioner’s Meetings Calendar.
Bylaws Revisions	Sandra Serna briefed the Henrietta Lacks Commission on revisions made to the Bylaws by the VDH staff.	Commission members, advised by Dr. Simon-Owens, will continue to review the bylaws. Any additional changes and updates proposed will be presented at the May 2023 meeting.
Report: Updates from the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Equity - <i>Staffing</i>  Report: Updates Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Equity - <i>Annual Reports</i>	VDH Changes: Sandra Serna informed the Henrietta Lacks Commission of the vacant commissioner position at VDH.  Commission Member Appointments- Governor Youngkin has appointed Mr. Christopher Lindsay, who has a long background in in healthcare administration as the chief operating officer. VDH is working on appointments for the Commissioner. This impacts Henrietta Lacks Commission appointments. No further updates are available currently regarding appointments.  Sandra Serna briefed the Henrietta Lacks Commission on the Henrietta Lacks Commission 2019 Annual Report, previously completed by former VDH OHE leadership, as well as the 2022 Annual Report. The 2022 Annual Report was recently signed off by the Deputy Commissioner of Government and Regulatory Affairs, and then sent to the General Assembly in January 2023.  <i>Note: The Henrietta Lacks Commission 2019 Annual Report was sent to the General Assembly in 2020.</i>	VDH will continue to monitor the appointment information sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth to attain appointment for the Member of the Halifax IDA, Lacks Family Member, and Board Member of Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group. VDH will share the status update with the commission members upon receipt.  The Chair, Dr. Simon-Owens, noted an error in the pagination listed for the appendices of the 2019 Annual Report. VDH will confirm correct appendices numbering before next meeting.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	<p><i>Dr. Simon-Owens expressed her uncertainty to how involved the commission was in the development in the 2019 Annual Report.</i></p>	
Draft Strategic Plan Review	<p>The commission members reviewed key components of the Draft Strategic Plan such as stakeholder input, staffing efforts, SWOT, and public/private partnership successes and challenges. Commission leadership summarized the history of trying to secure funding for a full-time position dedicated to moving the Henrietta Lacks Commission’s efforts forward.</p> <p>The Chair, Dr. Simon-Owens, expressed concerns with Henrietta Lacks Commission’s work potential as a public/private partnership due to staffing and lack of funding.</p>	The Draft Strategic Plan was accepted as a committee report.
New Business	<p>Update on Committees</p> <p>Commission Status Discussion</p> <p>Other Henrietta Lacks Efforts</p>	

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Update on Committees	<p>The Chair, Dr. Simon-Owens, recommended discontinuing the Henrietta Lacks Commission Committees and forgoing the assigning of new committees, due to the lack of collective commission work engaged since 2019. The chair further recommended the Henrietta Lacks Commission should move forward as a committee of the whole.</p> <p>No further discussion</p>	Henrietta Lacks Commission Committees will be discontinued, and the commission is moving forward as a committee of the whole.
Commission Status Discussion	<p>Henrietta Lacks Commission leadership expressed concerns about the commission’s ability to accomplish the mission by the sunset date, as the commission has only met twice since December 2019.</p> <p>Senator William Stanley made multiple remarks encouraging a rejuvenation of the commission’s work, further stating a need for a quantifiable plan to present to the General Assembly.</p> <p>Two commission members, Dr. Betty Adams and Danyell Duncan, agreed to help provide direct support to the plan.</p>	Commission members will convene to draft a plan to present to the General Assembly in order to gain financial support.
Public Comments	<p>No public comments were made.</p> <p>Dr. Simon-Owens invited all guests in the Zoom session to introduce themselves and share comments. WDBJ7 Senior Reporter, Joe Dashiell, introduced himself and expressed his interest in the Commission’s work.</p>	
Next Meeting Date	The Commission is scheduled to meet Thursday, May 18, 2023, 10AM-2PM.	VDH will send calendar holds for all upcoming meetings and will register the meetings as public meetings. VDH and Commission Leadership will identify May 2023 meeting agenda.
Adjournment	All Commissioners were provided the opportunity to make a comment prior to the meeting adjournment. The Chair, Dr. Simon-Owens, thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the meeting. She requested a motioned for an adjournment of the Henrietta Lacks Commission Meeting at 3:05 PM EST; Dr. Betty Adams made the motion and Kristy Johnson seconded the motion.	

