



City of Greensboro

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

MINUTES

August 7, 2014

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:30 p.m. on the above date in the Nussbaum Room, Greensboro Central Library with Vice-Chair Kim Williams presiding.

PRESENT: Interim Chair Janice Reaves; Commissioners Margaret Arbuckle, Kurt Collins, Gary Grandon, Adam Marshall, Tonya Doane and Kevin Williams

HUMAN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF: Executive Director Dr. Love Crossing; Isabel Gil Administrative Assistant and Interim Brandie Williams

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Commissioners Margaret Arbuckle, Chantale Wesley-Lamin and Gary Grandon.

VISITORS: Councilmember Marikay Abuzuaiter, Randy Eisenburg, Christina Hardy and Shade Nicholson.

CALL TO ORDER

In the absence of Interim Chair Reaves Dr. Love Crossing, HRD Director called the meeting to order; and a moment of silence was observed.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Vice Chair Williams welcomed visitors and invited to introduce themselves.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

There was no report from chair

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- CRC - Commissioner Adam Marshall reported that the meeting scheduled for August 6th was cancelled because there was no quorum. In addition, he went to the Council CRC Enhancement Committee and stated it was nice to be included in the discussion. City Council is looking at reevaluating how members of the CRC are being recruited and appointed and the CRC may have a different form and way to operate in the future.



COMMUNITY MATTERS

- Dr. Crossling wanted to provide an overview for police relations with the community. After all the staff was established in 2014 the HRD has geared attention to police community relations making sure that there is a fair, equitable treatment of citizens and a fair, equitable understanding of police responsibility in the relationships with whom they provide services. There are processes and procedures for officers to follow and ways to engage when they are on call but there is also the need to make sure that community members have an understanding not only about their rights but also effective ways to interface with the police to make sure there is a reduction in conflict. In 2013, there was an expansion of the capacity of types of complaints that can be received for the CRC. The Police made a commitment to hear all types of complaints and the HRD wanted to echo that in the process. In addition, there was an effort to provide training the members of the CRC. There is an outreach and education plan to include all populations, including college students but it is on hold after the Council decides to continue as it is.

Commissioner Picarelli invited the visitors to have an open dialogue about these concerns.

Commissioner Reaves asked what has the Council decided regarding the CRC. Dr. Crossling answered that one of the most pressing issues is where the CRC should be housed; right now it is under the Human Relations Commission; how the Council is going to appoint those members and the capacity to supervise the CRC whether stays under Human Relations Department or not; also to have other members of the community at large as part of it and also if a member of the Police should be sitting on the hearings. Dr. Crossling clarified the process stating that the process is as follows: Every case has to go to Professional Standards first, they investigate it and have a finding after a finding the CRC comes into play to review the findings by Professional Standards. The CRC does not do hearings or additional investigative reports. The question raised is if staff members of Human Relations or some other component of the city organizations should be part of those hearings with the police officers. Those are the main pressing issues that are up for debate and the CRC Enhancement committee is looking at.

Councilmember Abuzuaiter wanted to add that any citizen can bring a complaint to CRC/Human Relations Department. Dr. Crossling stated that the complaint is received but the procedure is that it needs to go to Professional Standards first.

Ms. Shade Nicholson shared that there seems to be a generational bitter taste in the minds of people in the community as it pertains to the police and are translating these to the minds of their children and some of them grow up hating the police when it shouldn't be that way. She collaborated in the summer with a program with GPD to counteract this issue, the Police actually talked to the kids in order to shift those minds. It is a concern that needs to be attacked in the hierarchy but also in the community because that is where all the turmoil is coming. It will be great to have more interaction to change that mentality.



Commissioner Reaves added that police officers need to have a sensitivity training.

Commissioner Picarelli added that Ms. Nicholson brought a good point about community involvement. The international community has a level of distrust built in that has been for generations, it is automatically assumed that if a Police officer is in a neighborhood or specific location is for a reason. He thinks the HRC along with the City Council and the Executive Department of the Police can start doing some community events but also encourage the community to be willing to establish those events.

Commissioner Williams added that there are structural pods established in the community. The Guilford county schools have a Student Resource Officer from the GPD or the Sherriff office. They are very approachable and really do care about the students, they actually have conversations with particular students within that school, so there is a grass root for the foundation that can be built upon to start a these community interactions.

Dr. Crossling commented that NCCJ does some work with school age populations with the Anytown program. Police officers are invited to participate in that event so NCCJ is partner in the table regarding community involvement. Also there is a college subcommittee that has sprouted from previous issues and there is collaboration with Bennett College where a student has been doing an excellent job with creating educational videos about the rights and potential discrepancies when interfacing with the police.

Commissioner Engle added that efforts by Police and Fire Departments towards the community like National Night out which is wonderful. His experience has been that if a church or any other organization calls Fire and Police to send somebody out they do a wonderful job doing it and it is an opportunity to have the kids interacting with them.

Councilmember Abuzuaiter mentioned about Neighborhood Oriented Policing which is an initiative where the police officer will be assigned to a specific community and they will stay in the zone during the entire shift. This is how it used to be and the HRC can bring the word out about.

Vice Chair Williams stated that it was a very good conversation and there is a lot of work to be done; at the moment the discussion needs to move to the next topic which is Youth Initiatives.

Dr. Crossling wanted to give an overview about the different efforts spearheaded by the HRD after the engagement of negative activities by the youth in downtown in summer of last year. There was a host of community conversations until October and a lot recommendations were brought to include increasing the hours of operations in community spaces like community centers, parks and places where there can be healthy congregation of youth. Also increasing capacity of recreational sports and cost reduction



so that families with multiple children could recreate all of them. There was an extension of hour of operations at recreation centers and increased the vouchers for those who wanted to participate. Also there was a feedback that members of the community that cater to youth would talk about their efforts and leverage resources the HRD started a series community youth engagements over the summer where leaders of well known organizations that spearhead youth initiatives were invited to the table to talk about maybe expanding the capacity of programs or leverage resources with other organizations. In addition, under the direction of councilmember Sharon Hightower, there was a Youth Summit which took on May 30th on Festival Park with vendors and youth organizers in booths allowing kids from middle and high school age to sign up for different activities that will become available in the fall. One recommendation that has been placed repeatedly is an Entrepreneurship Program. Currently, the COG Libraries have a periodically program where the participants have to travel a day or two and there are also other programs that last for two to four weeks but tuitions are very expensive. They are provided by Junior Achievement the cost is about \$750 a week which is a challenge.

Commissioner Picarelli asked councilmember Abuzuaiter if the City is still carrying a Note of Loan for the Nussbaum Center of Entrepreneurship. Councilmember replied that the council granted forgiveness for the entire loan. Commissioner Picarelli stated if they are partners with the City they could be able to provide this program and a conversation about it should be starting.

Dr. Crossling added that she has been talking for several months with The Possible Project which is a national entrepreneurship program in Boston and they were considering Greensboro to facilitate the program outside of Massachusetts. The beauty of the program is that it can reach fifty to a hundred youth at the time; however, they want to see a similar program established first because it requires a lot of community investment from foundations, city government and the school system who would have to support the endeavor first.

Commissioner Engle suggested getting in contact with the Nussbaum Center because it has great space and it is a good collaborative way for people to learn how to operate. Sam Flinch does a great job to outreach the community. It will be a great way to build credibility to the center and the community will be benefit greatly from it.

Commissioner Williams welcomed comments or questions from the floor.

Mrs. Wilson asked if there was a committee spearheading this initiative. Dr. Crossling replied it would be hosted by the Education or Programming Committee of the HRC or the Entrepreneurship committee.



STAFF REPORT

Dr. Crossling, HRD Director informed about the Envisioning Retreat to be held in the fall. The dates will be from 12 to 5 pm on Friday October 3 and Saturday October 4 from 9 to 1 pm. With the support from Intern Brandie Williams and Allen Hunt there will be a template sent out with the type of information that will be covered. It will have an assessment of the vision, mission and purpose and understanding the ordinances, then it will be moved to commissions and their functions, looking at what committees should be kept, eliminated or replaced for something else. Also, an envisioning portion to talk about where is the HRC going and how to get people involved and recruit members to the committees an look for ways of collaborations with CSW. Dr. Crossling encouraged the commissioners to come with a mind of tangible things the commission would like to achieve.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- June 4 , 2014 Meeting Minutes
On motion made by Commissioner Picarelli and seconded by Commissioner the minutes were unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Williams made a motion to extend the meeting for other fifteen minutes; Commissioner Reaves seconded it, all commissioners unanimously voted to extend the meeting.

Election of Chair

On motion made by Commissioner Reaves seconded by Commissioner Adam Marshall, Vice-Chair Kevin Williams was nominated to be the HRC chair. By oral vote, the commissioners unanimously voted to elect Commissioner Williams as chair.

Election of Vice-Chair

Elected Chair Williams motioned to modify the ballots to elect the vice chair, Chair Collins seconded the motion. Dr. Crossling asked commissioner to initial ballots. Commissioner Reaves counted the voting and reported that by a vote of 7 to 2 Commissioner Picarelli was elected HRC Vice-Chair.



Evening meeting schedule

There are three commissioners that haven't had the chance to vote on the day to hold the meeting. On motion made by Commissioner Collins and seconded by Commissioner Picarelli to the voting was postponed to the next HRC meeting on September 3, 2014.

Commissioner Williams acknowledge and thanked Commissioner Reaves for her years of services for the commission and for the work she has done over the years.

Commissioner Reaves encouraged the HRC to keep working for the citizens of Greensboro because they are depending on it.

ACKNOWLEDGE ABSENCES

Excused Absences were acknowledged.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Chair Williams and seconded by Commissioners Picarelli and Marshall, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Chairperson
Greensboro Human Relations Commission

Approved: _____
Date