



## **Meeting Minutes**

**August 10, 2017**

**The Human Relations Commission (HRC)** convened for a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. on the above date in the Board Room at the YWCA of Greensboro. **Chair Zac Engle** presided over the meeting.

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Zac Engle, Moussa Issifou, Michelle Kennedy, Samuel Hawkins, Lindy Perry-Garnette, Lindsay Burkart, David Wils, Tom Phillips, David Sevier, Chantale Wesley-Lamin

**Commissioners Absent:** Jacqueline King, Kumar Bhardwaj, Irving Allen, Margaret Arbuckle, Freman Murphy, Ed Cobbler

**Human Relations Department Staff:** Love Crossling, Jodie Stanley

**Legal Department Staff:** Rosetta Davidson

**Council Liaison:**

**City Manager's Office:**

**Visitors:** Raleigh Stout, Keith Funderburk with The Social and Emotional Learning Group

### **I. Call to Order**

Chair Engle called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

### **II. Moment of Silent Meditation**

Chair Engle called for a moment of silent meditation.

Chair Engle invited Keith Funderburk to speak. Funderburk introduced himself as a representative of The SEL Group, a counseling and emotional wellness agency. He stated that mental health was an important topic of conversation, highlighting the most recent issue of opioid awareness. He invited commissioners to two upcoming events, one in October, another in February, to raise awareness about mental illness, noting that 1 out of every 4 people would struggle with a form of mental illness. He pointed out that especially in the African American community, mental illness

was a taboo discussion. It was acceptable to go to counseling with a pastor, but that it was not yet acceptable to go to counseling with a professionally trained counselor. He recalled a successful conference in 2012 where the faith community partnered with mental health professionals to raise awareness, noting that the faith community was an important community to tap if you wanted to gain trust and buy in. He stated that it was difficult for members of the baby boomer generation and the black community to trust institutional health, offering the example of his own mother, who when she was diagnosed with arthritis, expressed a preference to find a white doctor because she felt he would have more credentials. He noted that this was a common misconception, one of many that they wanted to address.

One of their primary goals was to increase awareness of mental health in the African American community, that while mental illness impacted every community, it impacted the African American community in a unique way. Their goal was to destigmatize mental illness by having speakers share personal experiences, raise awareness about the many resources available in Guilford County through institutions like Cone Health, and provide culturally competency training for professionals to equip them to better address the issues.

Funderburk stated that it was his desire to offer this training to members of the Greensboro Police Department so that they were equipped to know how to address mental illness specifically in the African American community.

Commissioner Wesley-Lamin asked what topics they planned to cover. Funderburk's response included cultural competency related specifically to African American residents, offering the example of Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome (PTSS). Disparities were causing issues within the African American community that other communities weren't experiencing and found difficult to understand. The goal was to address behaviors that were showing up, and to ensure that the behaviors were being addressed appropriately, not in a manner that would cause more damage. Commissioner Hawkins asked if there was any consideration in partnering with Child Protective Services. Funderburk stated that yes, they were partnering with CPS and social workers to ensure that they received the same information. Hawkins also suggested reaching out to all of the Public Safety departments and partners, highlighting that incarcerated persons experienced mental illness and that often, it was parole officers finding themselves in situations where they were acting as social workers. Funderburk expressed agreement.

Chair Engle asked about the event dates and times. Funderburk stated that the first event would be held on Saturday, October 21. Area college choirs would be invited, they would host a singing competition and then planned to roll out mental health training. The second event would take place on Friday, February 23, 2018 from 8 am to 5 pm. Engle suggested that Funderburk be connected to Captain Nathaniel Davis with the Greensboro Police Department to request that police officers take part in the training.

Funderburk invited all commissioners to join them the following day at Wiley Elementary School, 600 W Terrell St., the most impoverished school in Greensboro. They had gathered judges, lawyers, even Congressman Mark Walker, to high-five the students as they entered the school on their first day back. The goal was to encourage the students and get them excited about school.

Wesley-Lamin asked if The SEL Group had faith-based Counselors. Funderburk said yes, they had faith-based counselors, although it was something they provided upon request and did not push on their customers. He pointed out their contact information on the back of the packet he had handed out. He thanked the commissioners for their time.

Commissioner Perry-Garnette thanked him for doing the mental health event and said it was really important. Commissioner Sevier asked what would follow the events, and did they have next steps planned. Funderburk stated that it was their desire to sponsor an ongoing discussion around mental health with mental health professionals, city leaders, the Greensboro Police Department and other community organizers. Their hope was to have practical discussions around mental health and to work to reduce gaps, including in the conversation social workers, faith leaders and researchers, and find ways to reach out to more community members. If someone was having a mental health issue, it would show up somehow. The prison system was the biggest mental health facility in the nation at the moment. They wanted to plant a seed of hope and work with families and young people and to do their part to implement change.

He stated that they were partnering with various mental health agencies to make this initiative happen. Commissioner Hawkins stated that it was his desire, through the work of the Committee for Social Equity, to partner actively with this initiative. Engle expressed support of Hawkins' desire to partner. Engle suggested that members of the Greensboro Police Department were already receiving mental health training. He added that officers had probably seen things that most people had not and were certainly impacted by what they experienced. Funderburk stated that it had been suggested that they could offer support to the police officers as they most certainly did experience trauma in their line of work.

### **Chair Report**

Chair Engle stated that he had attended part of the very successful IAC Soccer Tournament on July 29 and was pleased with what he saw. It seemed well organized. He mentioned that he was part of a synerG panel lunch and learn with Dr. Crossling and Jodie Stanley, and that the event went well. He also participated in College Hill's National Night Out event with Commissioner Sevier.

Engle mentioned that for the past two years, the Commission chose to continue to meet in the month of July, but didn't have quorum. He suggested that the Commission vote to cancel July meetings going forward.

### **Motion to Cancel Future July Meetings**

Moved by: Commissioner Phillips

Seconded by: Commissioner Wils

The motion passed unanimously.

Engle mentioned that the Chair and Vice Chair positions would need to be filled and asked for volunteers to serve on the election and nomination committee. Thus far, he had not received any nominations. He suggested that it would be best to allow a nominating committee to handle the matters of the election. Commissioner Hawkins asked if it would impede one's ability to run for office. All agreed that no, it wouldn't.

Engle called for volunteers for the nominating committee. Commissioners Hawkins, Issifou, Sevier and Burkart volunteered to serve on the nominating committee.

Engle asked for an update from Dr. Crossling on the progress of the Police Community Review Board. Crossling gave a brief overview, stating that there was progress on both of the open cases, one was awaiting administrative processes, and the other was further along.

### **Education Committee**

Commissioner Wils stated that it was their hope to hear back from Ivan Canada after he expressed a desire to reach out to representatives with Guilford County Schools. In the absence of a response, the committee had also discussed the possibility of coordinating a youth round table on equity education issues. The committee also planned to follow up separately with Guilford County School's Officer of Diversity and Inclusion's Monica Walker to find out what she had in mind. He stated that he was already working with Monica and would see if she would also be open to partnering on an initiative related to education equity.

### **Human Services**

Chair Engle stated that this committee was in need of a chair and he encouraged commissioners to consider serving in this capacity.

### **Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee**

Commissioner Issifou deferred to staff. Dr. Crossling stated that they were in the beginning stages of defining the 2017-2018 housing series and would present that to Issifou and others for approval and feedback.

### **International Advisory Committee**

IAC Chair Franca Jalloh stated that July had been a busy month, starting with the July 4 Independence Day JUS NC Tournament and the July 8 World Refugee Day Celebration at Barber Park. There was also the soccer tournament at the end of July. She mentioned that she came on the first day, and she saw HRC Commissioner Issifou there with his soccer team.

Jalloh also announced that their first IAC Lunch & Learn, with a focus on deportation and detention, was scheduled for Wednesday, August 16 at 12 noon at Central Library. Families were being torn apart when their members were being picked up, detained, and then deported. Jalloh stated that the international community was ready to band together around this issue and address it together. Jeremy McKinney with McKinney Immigration Law, Zumo Kollie, Greensboro Police Department's Captain Davis, Julie Peeples, a local pastor who was offering sanctuary, and local advocate Laura Garduno-Garcia would serve as panelists. In addition, many impacted family members were planning to speak, including the blind son of a family member and a pregnant mother whose husband was detained at his job. She mentioned a registration link and an emailed invitation. Jodie Stanley offered to send the registration to the commissioners. Jalloh finished by sharing that Dr. Christina Yongue would also share back to school tips.

Commissioner Sevier commented that he had attended Guilford College's Soy Un Lider event and he was amazed that so many undocumented students had made it into colleges and planned to proceed with their education. It was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event. Jalloh noted that it was headed by Irving Zavalata, former vice chair of the IAC. She also pointed out that while these students had found a path to education, many families were still struggling and did not have a chance at education.

Engle thanked Jalloh for sharing.

### **Committee for Social Equity**

Commissioner Hawkins expressed his excitement about an upcoming partnership with Alcohol and Drug Services, an event recognizing International Overdose Awareness Day. The event's purpose was to raise awareness about the issues surrounding opioid abuse. It was an open event on August 31 from 6-8:30 pm at Oak Hollow Mall in High Point. They planned to share information and resources for those impacted, interested or curious.

He announced the success of the recent Thrive GSO Employment and Education event, and stated that the Thrive GSO quarterly meeting was coming up 10-11:30 am on August 24, and all were invited. He also mentioned that he had the opportunity to dialogue with Congressman Mark Walker's group. There was going to be an event that they hoped to pull together for Greensboro around September.

### **Staff Report**

Dr. Crossling asked commissioners running for Council to be mindful of their messaging and representation, how they asserted their stance, and to either represent as a candidate or as a commissioner. While sometimes the issues overlapped, if there was ever a question on how they should respond, staff's door was open and they were willing to offer guidance. She noted that this was not based on any concerns expressed, simply a reminder.

She also reminded commissioners of the importance of established communication processes regarding partnerships. Summer was often a quiet season but fall programs were getting ready to gear up again. She asked that when commissioners built partnerships, that they come back to staff to fully inform them of the partnership, its development and purpose. There might be history that staff was aware of, or other initiatives going on that could be connected. She also advised that staff was responsible to work closely with communications on branding and that the use of the logo was limited to their policies. For these reasons, it was important to communicate well and often.

Crossling shared the results of the recent retreat survey, noting that decisions would not be made immediately. Chair Engle asked if a date was chosen and Crossling responded that it had not because a doodle poll had not yet been sent out to identify a date. Engle suggested that a doodle poll be sent shortly as many people had things coming up and might find themselves unavailable. He also suggested that although many people stated in the survey results that they didn't want to be involved in planning, that staff open it up again when planning began. Stanley stated that they

hadn't received many responses, but the survey was still open in case anyone else wanted to respond.

Dr. Crossling finished by reiterating the success of the recent Thrive GSO Employment, Education & Reentry event, stating that the most impactful portion of the Thrive event was to see people in need stand up, express a need and before they sat down, someone volunteered to help with the issue.

## **VI. Review of Meeting Minutes**

### **Motion to Approve June 8 Meeting Minutes**

Moved by: Commissioner Wils  
Seconded by: Commissioner Phillips  
The motion passed unanimously.

### **Motion to Approve June 29 Special Meeting Minutes**

Moved by: Commissioner Burkart  
Seconded by: Commissioner Phillips  
The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Engle stated that the July 13 Meeting Notes did not have to be approved as there was no quorum at that meeting.

Dr. Crossling stated that while she had offered a brief report on the existing progress of the PCRB's work, did the Ad Hoc PCRB Assessment Committee want to offer an update.

Commissioner Phillips stated simply that it was a work in progress. Commissioner Sevier asked if Crossling wanted to give the update, noting first that the City was now an official member of the National Association for the Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement and that several people planned to attend an upcoming conference. Dr. Crossling stated there was some support to continue looking at the structure and the new elements, including a request for the PCRB process as it currently exists to be in suspension with the exception of the two cases that are pending. Additional cases would not be heard until the new elements of this new structure were decided by Council, discussion would be held at a Council work session the following week.

## **IX. Adjournment**

### **Motion to adjourn.**

Moved by: Commissioner Phillips  
Seconded by: Commissioner Burkart  
The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm.

Minutes Approved by:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson**

**Greensboro Human Relations Commission**

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**Date**