

# Topeka Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes  
January 5, 2015

Commissioners met on January 5, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. for the January monthly meeting  
Holliday Building – Conference Room  
620 SE Madison Street  
Topeka, KS 66603

To request an ADA accommodation, please contact 368-3606 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. no later than 3 working days in advance of this meeting.

## **Mission Statement:**

*The mission of the Human Relations Commission is to conduct outreach and educational activities that promote justice and cultural understanding, and improve relationships among all citizens of the City of Topeka.*

## Commissioners present:

Ms. Lorean Williams  
Ms. Margo Rangel  
Ms. Amy Cohen  
Ms. Stephanie Mott  
Mr. Mike Padilla  
Mr. Anthony Fadale

## Commissioners absent:

Mr. Bill Beachy  
Ms. Darcella Goodman  
Ms. Joyce Grigsby

### **I. Call to order – Commissioner**

Noting a quorum, Lorean Williams, Chair, called the meeting at order at 5:30 p.m. Lorean Williams, Chair, asked for a volunteer to take minutes. Margo Rangel volunteered.

Margo stated that she would inquire of Ms. Shawn Maisberger that a recorder be provided to the commission.

### **II. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a Moment of Silence**

### **III. Approval of Agenda**

Amy made a motion to adopt the agenda and Stephanie seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from December meeting were presented. Mike made a motion to adopt the minutes; Anthony seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

#### **V. Staff Report**

Shawn was unable to attend the meeting tonight and she has not been told who her replacement will be at this time.

#### **VI. Committee Reports**

- *Prejudice & Poverty Committee Update*

Stephanie asked if Mike could provide her with the contact information for the Hermanita program with MANA de Topeka. Mike did not have the information on hand. Margo provided Stephanie with Angela Valdivia's contact information for the Hermanita program.

Stephanie is working on scheduling the second P&P session at the Topeka Public Library.

Amy stated she has sent out all letters of interest. She received three responses from:

- Rabbi Debbie Stiel with Temple Beth Sholom
- Shawnee County Sheriff Herman Jones
- Ms. Jami Nichols, Corp Dev Manager with Valeo Behavioral Health Care, Topeka

Commission needs to ensure that these individuals and organization are contacted. Mike suggested that the letter be placed on the HRC website. Amy suggested changing the salutation to "Whom it May Concern." Anthony suggested "To the Citizens of Topeka." Lorean suggested "Topeka Community." Amy will follow up with Shawn for the soft copy of the letter.

- *Troy Scroggins Award Committee Update*

Stephanie was very pleased with the presentation. In June the Troy Scroggins Committee will begin taking nominations for "Adult & Youth." Get out and spread the word.

Margo will inquire if prepaid envelopes could be provided to Commissioners. The envelopes would be provided to those who have completed the application. Commissioner would take the prepaid sealed envelope and ensure mailing.

- *Town Hall Committee Meeting Update*

Margo reported that she needs to follow up with her contacts regarding "Voter Registration" and discuss dates of availability.

Stephanie stated that she would be able to provide Margo with a contact person with the League of Women Voters.

Mike is going to contact Joan Wagnon, Chair of Kansas Democratic Party and LULAC.

Margo will follow up at next meeting.

Mike made mention of marketing HRC and visiting with Susie Gilbert. Margo had an opportunity to speak with Susie regarding marketing needs of the HRC and stated the Susie was willing and interested in assisting. Susie would need to know who the commissions contact person would be and the need of the commissioners to express the value and worth of the commission.

Stephanie-the community is that of a thermometer and how important we are a reflection.

Anthony suggested we invite Susie Gilbert. Need to spread the love...need staff.

Mike - Susie needs to know who we are and the things that we are concerned about.

Anthony- Need to up our prominence and see what Susie can add.

Lorean - Susie needs to get to know us, the commission.

## **VII. Old Business**

Lorean mentioned that the annual report is due. Asked Commissioners to think about what we have been doing. Requested that each of us supply her with their accomplishments and/or training attended by Monday, January 12th, 2015. Lorean will be responsible for forwarding information to Shawn.

New Business - Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mike - we need to have attendance at next meeting. It is imperative for voting on the Chair and Vice Chair. It is long overdue.

Stephanie made motion for voting be on the agenda for February 2nd, meeting. Moved and seconded by Mike.

Anthony - reiterated the importance of quorum.

Need to inquire about 2012 and 2013 annual report of Shawn.

## **VIII. New Business**

Ban the Box

Stephanie provided copies to the commission of an article "Ban the Box".

The campaign challenges the stereotypes of people with conviction histories by asking employers to choose their best candidates based on job skills and qualifications not past convictions.

Stephanie spoke of City Employment to remove box to identify to a crime prior to being interviewed.

Mike - worthy discussion. Would like to see city ordinance and be able to counter.

Margo cited examples where a past action could result in an arrest/conviction. What type of criminal act be considered? Work environment, etc.

Mike - What about legitimate violent, misdemeanor, felony and crimes against persons?

Lorean requested that Stephanie provide additional information for discussion.

Stephanie commented that asking or giving a person an opportunity to converse. She has changed. Do we discard without a chance to discuss?

#### **IX. Public Comments**

None.

#### **X. Commissioner remarks**

**Stephanie** - Speaking on January 22nd to VA Staff. She is recovering from a heart attack, doing better.

Regarding Marriage Equality - State of Kansas is fighting to against recognizing all people being treated fairly. If we, HRC don't fight then Stephanie doesn't want to a part of any organization. Gotta do it.

**Amy** - Consider participating in MLK and in February African American/Black History month.

**Lorean** - The City of Topeka will pay half of our ticket to the MLK event "Living the Dream". Always being behind the eight8 ball being reactive vs proactive.

**Anthony** - 25th ADA series of events being put on TILRC & Dole Institute. HRC possibly partner. Anthony will pitch it to them. Will follow up with us at next meeting.

**Mike** - Thanked Amy for putting the letter together and getting it on the website. Need to see about asking Susie Gilbert to attend HRC meeting to discuss marketing. January 12th to annual report comments to Lorean. Mike & Lorean have been asked to sit on the Chiefs Advisory Board.

Mike needs to feel reenergized and the need to see a purpose. Being proactive to whole issue of equality and justice and treating relief from discrimination. Special projects and agendas pull us apart. He is encouraged by what he has heard today.

**Margo** - Great discussion!

**Lorean** - knows were making change. Climate changes with City. We don't show up for our own events. Be a better commission. Don't work behind the eight ball.

Appreciate everyone time. Share what need to be discussed.

**Lorean** got a sympathy card for Bill and forgot to bring but will sign for all of us. Commented that history is history. Fight hard as human begins being treated fair.

**XI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting will be February 2, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Commissioner Margo Rangel