

# Topeka Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2015

Commissioners met on May 4, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. for the May 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. Amy Cohen  
Ms. Stephanie Mott  
Ms. Darcella Goodman  
Mr. Bill Beachy

Commissioners absent:

Mr. Mike Padilla  
Ms. Joyce Grigsby  
Mr. Anthony Fadale  
Ms. Margo Rangel

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

Noting a quorum, Stephanie Mott, Chair, called the meeting at order at 5:30 p.m.

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

## **III. Approval of Agenda**

Bill made a motion to adopt the agenda and Amy seconded. No Discussion. Motion carried

## **IV. Approval of Minutes**

Correction Bill would like the month changed on page one where the adoption of minutes stated February and needed to be changed to April

Bill motioned to adopt the minutes as amended. Darcella seconded. Motion carried.

v. **Staff Report**

Shane did not have a staff report.

vi. **Old Business**

- ***Ban The Box***

Jacque Russell and Michele Smith were present from the City of Topeka. Jacque stated that the City does not ban the box but they protect the box. The questions answered on a job application are only visible to the HR staff. The background screening is only done after the interview process. If the applicant has a conviction it has to be a close match to the job the applicant is applying for them to be disqualified for the job. Michele stated the application is a 2 part process. The second part of the application is where personal questions are asked and that part is only seen by Jacque, Michele and 1 other administrator. Jacque stated that ban the box is not needed to do a background check. Chief Brown talked about the importance of forgiveness for those that do have to check the box also the City partnering with younger teens to work on a mentor program so that when they applied for a job they would not have to check the box. Lorean added that we need to educate people that have a criminal history about programs for them to utilize to help them go in the right direction. Lorean also stated that we need to make sure that those with a criminal past don't get discouraged by having to check the box and they should still fill out the application. Stephanie asked if the City would be able to band the box. Jacque stated that the City would not be able to completely ban the box. Lorean motioned to have a Town Hall meeting for ban the box. Darcella seconded.

**Bill motioned to extend the meeting to 7:30 pm, Lorean seconded. Motion passed.**

- ***Fair Housing Month***

Stephanie represented the HRC and was pleased with the workshops and how well they went.

vii. ***New Business***

- TPD Hands on the wheel

Chief Brown discussed informing youth on what to expect when being pulled over by a Police Officer and steps to take to help with the communication between those that are being pulled over and the Police Officer.

- ***Anti-Discrimination Policy***

- Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations

Stephanie insisted on the HRC staff to continue to come up with topics to start the dialogue process about important issues.

## VIII. **Committee Reports**

- ***Prejudice & Poverty Committee Update***

Lorean stated the next meeting will be on May 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm and the importance of attending.

- ***Troy Scroggins Award Committee Update***

The press release will go out soon. Nominations are being currently accepted. The presentation will be June 9<sup>th</sup> by the Mayor and City Council. HRC discussed the need for someone to talk about the purpose of the award at the presentation. HRC will bring rough draft of what they would like said to the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

- ***Town Hall Committee Meeting Update***

The next town hall meeting will be June 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00pm. HRC is requesting refreshments to be available for their town hall meetings. HRC needs to discuss publicity options with City 4 staff and possible have the Media Relations Director attend.

## IX. **Public Comments**

None.

## X. **Commissioner remarks**

**Darcella** – Thanked everyone for a great meeting and fair officials

**Lorean** – The HRC needs to get a card for Margo and have all of the HRC sign it

**Bill** – Thank Amy for getting him a sweat shirt, Holiday room was very cold

**Amy** – Reminded everyone to go to the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting at 5:30pm. She enjoyed the ideas and information that was given at the meeting. Is invigorated to start the workshops

**Stephanie** – Thanked everyone for Ban the Box dialogue. She hopes the HRC continues to find hot topics to discuss and find resolution for those topics. She also hopes for City 4 to be at the next meeting.

## XI. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Amy to adjourn the meeting. Bill seconded. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be June 1, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Shane Wilson.