

Topeka Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2015

Commissioners met on September 8, 2015 at 5:36 p.m. for the September monthly meeting
Holliday Building – Sunflower 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
Mr. Bill Beachy
Ms. Crystal Irwin

Commissioners absent:

Mrs. Darcella Goodwin
Mrs. Joyce Grigsby

I. Call to order – Commissioner

Noting a quorum, Commissioner Mott, Chair, called the meeting at order at 5:36 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a Moment of Silence

III. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Bill Beachy made a motion to adopt the agenda and Commissioner Lorean Williams seconded. No Discussion. Motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Corrections –

- Page 3 fifth bullet – *The Department of Neighborhood Relations will include the Human Relations Commission in future survey verbiage prior to distribution.*
- Page 4 – “City of Topeka Non-Discrimination Ordinance” *Commissioner Williams indicated that this is done on an annual basis.*

Commissioner Lorean Williams made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Amy Cohen seconded. Motion carried.

v. **Staff Report**

Monique went over the following items with the HRC staff

- 635 SW Harrison has new ownership by a local bank. The concerns of potential mold and ADA violations will be brought to the attention of Shawnee County Health Agency and the Division of Property Maintenance & Code.
- 2016 Human Relations Commission budget was approved for \$2,500 by the City Council. The funds will be included in Monique's Division of Community Engagement budget.
- Rock the Park will be held in collaboration with Highland Park High School and the City of Topeka. This kickoff event is to celebrate the students of Highland Park assisting to Rock the Block (light landscaping in the R-O-W) for the low-to-moderate neighborhoods surrounding their school.
- HRC Commissioner's business cards have been ordered.

Committee Reports

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

- **Social Justice Education Training**

- Commissioner Mott is trying to coordinate with Precious & Marcia to reschedule the training. In addition, she is researching other potential trainings and may potentially provide the training.

- **Multi-Agency Meeting**

- Commissioner Cohen shared that the last meeting was cancelled due to the lack of attendees. The group has met five (5) times. Amy is working on rescheduling the meeting.

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

- The Human Relations Commission will create script and content. The video will include Mr. Troy Scroggins family members and those who they feel can share information pertaining to his works.

- Example of the video layout

1. *Award*
2. *Past recipients*
3. *Introduction of the Scroggins family*
4. *Information on the award categories*
5. *Nomination information*
6. *How to apply*
7. *When to apply*
8. *Comments from someone that worked with him and can talk about the cause*

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

Commissioner Williams provided Monique with corrections to the flier. She requested for Monique to provide her with a draft letter to send to potential participating businesses. The letter will be sent to all Commissioners. The following businesses have confirmed their attendance; Target, Goodyear, Reesers, Memory Foam Liquidators.

In addition, she inquired if Jacque Russell, Human Resources Director would be attending the Town Hall. Chief Ron Brown, Topeka Police Department has confirmed his attendance.

Commissioner Mott will talk with the Director of the Department of Corrections pertaining to their participation.

The Town Hall will be promoted via NextDoor and the agenda for the meeting will be provided to Monique by Commissioner Williams. The room layout should be theatre style facing east.

VI. ***Old Business***

- ***PSA's and Other Promotional Activities***

Commissioner Mott will compile a draft brochure

- **Budget**

Commissioner Mott requested that everyone think about upcoming 2016 expenditures such as; training, security, food, etc.

Monique will request that Amanda Barbosa, Department of Neighborhood Relations, Finance and Compliance manager will provide HRC with a quarterly report.

- **City of Topeka Non-Discrimination Ordinance**

Commissioner Mott requested to continue to think about the discussion on whether there is a need for a second recommendation to the City Council or an ordinance pertaining to the sexual orientation & gender identity

What does the committee think about the idea?

There needs to be continued discussion of the creation of a protective class for sexual orientation and gender identity. There are seven or eight protective classes and gender identity is excluded. Other communities around the nation are doing it.

Commissioner Beachy is in agreement and wants to know what tactics need to be utilized. He wrote up some information and feels comfortable moving forward with the initiative.

Commissioner Cohen is in agreement with Commissioner Mott and wants to figure out what tactics and strategies other cities have used.

The City of Rolling Park's governing body sponsored the ordinance. The City of Lawrence adopted sexual orientation one year and gender identity the next year.

The City of Wichita retracted the entire Civil Rights ?

The City Council would have to sponsor or make a recommendation to act upon or not act upon. Commissioner Mott doesn't think the climate is good. There needs to be more frequency of transgender topics included in the paper and publicized which will show movement closer to the goal line. It is vital to have the discussion with businesses and place and places of employment.; housing, etc.

The current statistic is 50% of transgender teens attempt suicide. There is an urgency in an equality in ordinances to help reduce this statistic.

It is vital to strategize. Equality Kansas will make a determination to move forward.

Do you want to have the discussion?

1. Invite the potential discussion
2. Sense of strategy

Commissioner Beachy doesn't want to do a proposal and loose. But, he is supportive.

- October Agenda
 1. Troy Scroggins Award
 2. Budget
 3. Division Director Corrie Wright, Housing Services

Commissioner Irwin inquired if there was annual education (harassment training) provided to employees with the inclusion of LGBT. Crystal has included a section in her training materials. She has taught Cultural Competency for the last six (6) years in the healthcare industry.

Chair Mott would like to know who would provide the training. There isn't anyone qualified to do LGBT education. Stephanie would like to view Crystal's training materials in the future.

There is a three (3) day diversity training in Washington, D.C.

VII. **New Business**

There are two Commissioner opening's; Commissioner Fadale's and Commissioner Padilla's to be filled.

Thank you to former Commissioners to be discussed in October.

Additional items for the October agenda

1. Social Retreat
2. General direction of HRC
3. Development of identity

VIII. **Public Comments**

None.

IX. **Commissioner remarks**

Commissioner Cohen – Civil Rights Conference at the Brown vs. Board of Education, Anthony Fadale did a tremendous job. And, the audience participation was good. She feels that people are ready and invigorated to deal with today's realities which are frustrating. The Commissioner appreciated the opportunity to be able to attend.

Commissioner Beachy – Bill was pleased to see the number in attendance at the Civil Rights Conference.

He attended a fundraiser for the NAACP with Carlton Scroggins working the KU concession stand. He is unsure of the percentage they earned. He believes the Economic Development Chair, Earl Williams indicated they raised between \$700 - \$900.

Commissioner Williams– The Kansas Black Expo was phenomenal this past Saturday at Gage Park. The event was all day on Saturday and ended around 9PM. Hundreds of people eat free food, rode the carousel, train rides and watched a drill exposition. The Commissioner saw all walks of life participating grandmothers, great grandchildren and little dogs.

The committee is starting to plan the 2016 event now. There was not a lot of mainstream advertisement. But, it was heavily advertised on social media. The churches provided the food.

Chair Mott – The 3rd Annual Trans Kansas Conference will be held on Saturday, September 11th – September 12th in Manhattan, KS at the First Congregational UCC. Please go to www.transkansa.com for more information. Some presenters will be the Black Transman, Inc. out of Dallas, TX, and a physician and an attorney out of Tulsa.

The Topeka Pride will be held on September 21st – September 27th. Please visit www.topekapride.org for more information. Some of the events are as follows:
September 21st – International Day of Peace – Metropolitan Community Church
September 22nd – 1st Annual Topeka Pride Awards
September 23rd – Karaoke Contest
September 24th – LGBT Educational Workshops – 9AM – 9PM – Stephanie will be the instructor

Billboard located at 21st & SW Western.

The organization is going to open the Capital City Equality Center prior to the end of 2015. They want to be physically accessible and emotionally accessible.

The 2016 TransKansas Conference potentially will be held in Topeka.

x. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Commissioner Williams to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Beachy seconded. Motion carried.

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

Respectfully submitted by Monique Glaude’.