

Topeka Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2013

Commissioners met on June 3, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. for the June 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. Darcella Goodman
 Ms. Joyce Grigsby
 Ms. Stephanie Mott
 Ms. Joyce Rorie
 Mr. Bill Beachy
 Mr. Anthony Fadale by phone

Commissioners absent: Ms. Renee Wiggins

City Present: Ms. Shawn Maisberger

- I. Call to order – Commissioner**
Noting a quorum, Lorean Williams, Chair, called the meeting at order at 5:30 p.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a Moment of Silence**
- III. Adoption of Agenda**
Bill made a motion to adopt the agenda; Joyce G. seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.
- IV. Approval of Minutes**
Bill made a motion to adopt the February 4 minutes; Joyce G. seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.
- V. Staff Report**
 - Shawn reported that she had not received any calls.

- Shawn agreed to research information forms and help new members during their orientation.

VI. Old Business

- *Town Hall Committee Meeting Update*
 - Margo updated the commission on recent attempts to discuss possible options with partnering with the city through Cindy White and Jacque Russell from Human Resources with the Diversity Committee.
 - City staff shared that they plan to host an event in the fall and would like the commission to partner but no definite plans are set.
 - Margo shared her concern and hesitation due to previous attempts to partner with the City and they have not always worked out.
 - Discussion on future topics and the idea of partnering is always a good opportunity for the commission. She requested future ideas be forwarded to her so that the commission can decide at the next month's meeting.
 - At this point in time the Commission will plan to partner with the City for an October event.
 - Stephanie mentioned an idea for a future meeting – prisoners released need a recidivism program. There was much discussion about the subject and folks in the community such as Nancy Johnson who are helping to bring life to the neighborhoods is developing another program. Margo will contact Nancy Johnson to get dates so that the commission does not compete with their date and there may be possible partnership opportunities.
- *Troy Scroggins Award Committee Update*
 - No report. The committee has not met.

VII. New Business

- Proposed amendments to city code
 - Stephanie discussed her proposal to the commission to request that gender identify and sexual orientation be added to the city code. Commissioners shared that they continue to request that the council add the suggested language but they have not have much progress.
 - Bill made a motion asking Stephanie to pursue with the city council to add the suggested language to the HRC purpose; Joyce seconded. No further discussion motion passed. Note Stephanie abstained from the vote.
 - Stephanie will contact the city council to see what support and action.
- Committee Formation
 - Stephanie requested that a committee be formed under the direction of the Commission to investigate and report on the institutionalized prejudice and how it relates to the disparity of poverty.
 - She shared the table of poverty levels in the US and specifically in Topeka. In 2011 it is reported that those living in poverty is 15.5% white, 32.5% Black, 28.8% Hispanic, and 27% Native American.

- She believes that there is a direct correlation between the two and believes that the committee could participate with Resers, CRC, NAACP to compare figures and conduct a study to find the facts.
- Stephanie requested that a committee be formed and that she would agree to Chair the committee.
- Bill made a motion, Margo seconded to develop a committee titled “Prejudice and Poverty” and that Stephanie be appointed Chair. No further discussion. Motion carried. Joyce R and Darcella agreed to participate on the committee.

VIII. Public Comments

- Guest Bernadette Koslover – informed the Commission that the United Way has the 311 call center to help identify where people can receive help and from what organization. She would also like to see the new committee open it up to other prejudices as well as additional members to assist.
- Margo commented that Committees are a branch of the Commission and they must be sensitive and careful to display only the support and mission of the Commission. She does not want anyone speaking on her behalf so she wants to make sure nothing is released until the Commission has approved the event, program, etc.

IX. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Motts – Unable to say where committee was going (P&P). Attending Gay & Lesbian Journal meeting in Boston in August, V.P. of National Organization of Women, K-STEP 1st Annual Conference in KS.

Commissioner Rorie – Mentioned lack of sidewalks on 10th Fairlawn. Also stated it was important for community to be aware of local food pantries.

Commissioner Goodman –No Comment

Commissioner Grigsby – Attended the MANA Award Ceremony and KS Historical Society event.

Commissioner Beachy – Bill will be going to VA to attend his nieces wedding. Apologized for not calling in and stating he would be unable to attend last month’s meeting.

Commissioner Rangel – statement “Eternal Vigilance”

Commissioner Williams –All are involved in this Commission and this is a working Commission. We want the community to know that they can come to HRC Commission for outreach and education.

Shawn and Monique we appreciate all your help and assistance!!

Ensure that when we have scheduled events to invite Mayor, City Council members, and City Mgr.

Don't forget to NETWORK!!

Lastly, new commissioners were inquiring about business cards. Possibly have cards that allow them to write their name in and info.

Want Commissioners to ensure that everyone is heard and is place to come and express ideas.

Note: Could a list of all Past TH meetings be posted to the web and could a list of Troy Scroggins recipients' be provided?

X. Adjournment

Commission meeting adjourned.

The next meeting will be July 1, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Shawn Maisberger and Margo Rangel.