

Topeka Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2013

Commissioners met on October 7, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. for the October 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. Joyce Grigsby
 Mr. Bill Beachy
 Ms. Darcella Goodman
 Ms. Stephanie Mott
 Mr. Mike Padilla
 Mr. Anthony Fadale

Commissioners absent:

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. Introductions

An overview of the Commissions responsibilities was provided for new members of the commission. Commissioners welcomed the reappointment of Stephanie Mott and Anthony Fadale and newly appointed Commissioner Mike Padilla. Mike introduced himself and shared his personal and professional experience.

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Bill made a motion to adopt the agenda; Margo. seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

V. Approval of Minutes

No minutes were presented from September – no meeting.

VI. Staff Report

- Shawn shared the invitation for the Annual Freedom Fund Banquet and if Commissioners plan to attend they should notify her. Mike mentioned that Mana de Topeka is also hosting event the same night at the same location and it is too bad they are competing events.
- Anthony inquired as to whom on city staff would be assuming Mike McGee's responsibilities in regards to ADA. Shawn will inquire with the Public Works director and report back to the Commission.

VII. Old Business

- *Town Hall Committee Meeting Update*
 - Margo confirmed that the THM will be held at Avondale East with Nancy Johnson, executive director of CRC as the guest speaker.
 - She believes CRC can assist the Commission with additional exposure and notice to their following.
 - They have a follow up meeting to review the logistics and see if it is possible to video tape the presentation.
 - The focus will be to discuss CRC's services and how they can assist the community with a focus on food and housing. There is reference material and directories that can be helpful.
 - She believes this will be a beneficial partnership.
 - The flier was updated and Shawn will distribute to the Commission so that they can circulate it.
 - Margo will provide the cookies and napkins, Shawn will provide the water.
 - Margo and Lorean attended the CRC Luncheon and thought it was a wonderful event and theme. They had not experienced a luncheon so entertaining and well put together. It concentrated on change and working board and working together to create change and it relates to the Commission's mission as well.
 - A student program will be discussed as a future potential date and THM.
 - Lorean encouraged all Commissioners to attend.
 - Shawn will make sure that the media is notified and ask city communications to put it on social media along with Stephanie to post on the HRC Facebook.
- *Troy Scroggins Award Committee Update*
 - The committee has not received any nominations. The committee would like to nominate Girls on the Run a program working to empower girls.
 - The presentation would be Tuesday, December 10 at the Council meeting. Amy Pinegar would accept the award.
 - Bill made a motion that Girls on the Run received the Scroggins award, Anthony seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.
 - Shawn to coordinate certificate and plaque.
 - Stephanie and Joyce will present award.

- *Prejudice & Poverty Committee Update*
 - Stephanie reported that she has met with Joyce Martin with the YWCA and will follow up with her again.
 - She provided an overview for new Commission Padilla. She is getting back on track since she had to wait until her reappointment was approved.
 - After the THM she plans to have a forum on poverty and round table then discuss where to go from there.
 - The issues are transportation and culture and the need to work on breaking down the barriers. Want to see HRC as the hub to help address the issues that effect people.
- Need to update the website to reflect the language change in the bylaws.

VIII. New Business

- Anthony reported that the City ADA coordinator position has been eliminated and request who will be responsible for the duties and responsibilities. The City has lost institutional knowledge with Mike McGee leaving.
- Shawn agreed to find out who would be the contact person for future correspondence.

IX. Public Comments

- None.

X. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Fadale – it is nephew’s 14th birthday in Memphis. The NCD postponed their regional meeting due to the government shutdown, 2014 marks the 60th anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education and 2015 is the 25th anniversary of ADA – the Mobility magazine featured Topeka as one of the 7 cities for the best for wheelchair mobility. He will send the article.

Commissioner Grigsby –she is working on a personal project with the governor’s office to proclaim Frank Jaramillio on October 15 for Hispanic Heritage for his work with the border patrol. She wanted it to be known throughout the state – that he was from Oakland and it is good for young people to see the recognition.

Commissioner Goodman – she spoke with Councilmember Schwartz at the council meeting and she supports putting funding and reporting power back to the HRC department.

Commissioner Rangel – she discussed comments made at the council meeting about quorums and how many meeting the commission has had. Anthony made a comment about the quorum and attendance and that it is a volunteer board and commissioners help in the community. Bill explained the content of the comments made of support to the commission. Anthony clarified that it rubs him the wrong way when people talk negatively about the commission and that commissioners are trying their best. Margo stated that she was told that they would help the commission to get focused and that she was offended by this comment.

Commissioner Beachy – he stated that the commission is a good functioning group and knowledgably. His birthday was in July.

Commissioner Mott – she will be speaking in Lawrence on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Day of Remembrance by transgender candle light vigil is scheduled for Nov 20 at 7pm and the Equality House at 1200 Orleans St.

Commissioner Padilla – he is encouraged to hear about Joyce and her work. Working with discrimination in the community in regards to ethnicity and race relation – it is a broader scope than previous experience and that everyone in the room is a minority. He looks forward to the collaboration. He is currently on the Mana local board and the only male and there is more male involvement at the national level. There are several groups and organization in the community that have the same goal but competing for the same resources. He thanked everyone and look forward to helping with the goals of the HRC.

Commissioner Williams –She appreciates everyone. The issue with quorum was impacted by the number of vacancies that the Commission has had over the last several months. We cannot blame council but it is important for Commissioners to attend meetings to make a quorum. She thought they were trying to disrespect the commission. She encourages the commissioners to make sure they are doing their part and stay engage by attending meetings and she knows that emergencies come up. It is a working Commission and it takes time and we need to stay close and together as a unit. She means it from the heart if it's not her today it might be tomorrow. Don't get discouraged by what we are doing. THM we want people to know they can call on the HRC.

XI. Adjournment

Commission meeting adjourned.

The next meeting will be November 4, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Shawn Maisberger.