

Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2016

Members Present: Alice Lewis, Rev. John Clemons, Parrish Stahl, Jessica Embury, John Hawthorne, and Sue Mure entered the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Members Absent: Lynn Isaacs-Zolman (exc.), and Simon Foster.

Ex Officio Present: Valerie Cochran-Toops.

Also Present: Jonathan Greene, Staff, Vice Mayor Derek Dobies, and Lt. Adam Williams.

- I. **Call to Order:** By Chair Alice Lewis at 6:30 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call:**
- III. **Adoption of Agenda:** Motion to adopt the Agenda was made by Parrish Stahl, and supported by Rev. John Clemons. Motion carried.
- IV. **Citizen Comments:** Vice Mayor Derek Dobies spoke to the Commission regarding Agenda Item 10.C.i. He spoke in support of Melissa Morse as an HRC Commissioner. He also spoke in support of Hassan Ahmad to serve as an ex-officio on the HRC. He further entertained questions from the Commission about the City.

Chair Lewis expressed concern regarding why the HRC was not invited to participate in the community meeting held by the Police Department at the King Center. No one from the City contacted anyone on the Commission asking them to participate, and that is what the HRC is in place for, and part of its mission. She is concerned about the breakdown in communication between the City and the HRC. Vice Mayor Dobies stated that he met with the City Manager and discussed the fact that he felt this is something that the HRC should have had a part in. He stated he had the same type of reaction to the fact of the short notice and why certain groups weren't included. He will follow up with the City Manager. Chair Lewis expressed that she was very upset, disappointed, and felt ignored. At the very least the HRC could have been included in the discussion of planning it. Commissioners also expressed concern that the meeting was held on the same night and time as the HRC meeting. Also, it was noticed that the usual Police Liaison representative was not available for the HRC meeting. Jonathan will talk with the City Manager regarding this. Discussion followed regarding how there is a disconnect between City staff and the HRC. Parrish Stahl asked where the HRC goes from here since they are not included in city functions. Chair Lewis suggested the need to bring in a diverse group of people to hold a discussion. John Hawthorne suggested inviting the City Manager and Police Chief to an HRC meeting to discuss the outcome of the recent community meeting. Vice Mayor Dobies also offered to have a conversation with the City Manager on behalf of the group and to help facilitate a meeting. Members of the HRC agreed that they would like to be invited to attend community meetings and

included in the meetings in the future. Chair Lewis stated that she would invite the City Manager and Chief of Police to the next HRC meeting at the request of the Commission as a way to start a dialog.

V. **Guest:** None.

VI. **Approval of Minutes for May 18, 2016 Meeting:** Motion made by Parrish Stahl to accept the May 18, 2016, meeting minutes as submitted, supported by Rev. John Clemons. Motion carried.

VII. **Community Liaison Police Officer:** No report.

VIII. **Community Update/Chairperson's Correspondence:** Chair Lewis said that she had no report.

IX. **Staff Report:** Staff Jonathan Greene reported that a complaint was received against the Police Department. After reviewing the complaint staff found that there was nothing that fell within the HRC's realm. The Police Department should give a report on this complaint at the next HRC meeting. Parrish Stahl reported that five or six people contacted him about how the HRC will react to the current concerns in the community. He wanted these requests be included in the minutes. Chair Lewis stated that she hopes the HRC can schedule a meeting with the City Manager and Police Chief within the first two weeks of August.

Financial report: No change.

X. **Committee Reports:**

A. Public Relations: Parrish Stahl reported that he had completed an 11 page newsletter, and asked staff to upload it to the City's website since there are some time sensitive articles in it. Most HRC members said they didn't receive the newest newsletter, so Parrish said he would resend it. Parrish also stated that he had a flyer available for the picnic, and asked everyone to get the message out.

B. Policy Report: No report.

C. Nominating Committee:
Committee Chair Clemons explained the process of making a recommendation to the City Council. The Committee recommended the HRC vote for Melissa Morse for the current vacancy and Hassan Ahmad for the ex-officio position.

A motion was made by Committee Chair Clemons to recommend Melissa Morse to the Mayor and City Council to fill the current vacancy on the HRC. The

motion was supported by Parrish Stahl. Discussion followed. Jessica Embury spoke in support of Melissa Morse. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Committee Chair Clemons to appoint Hassan Ahmad as an ex-officio member of the HRC. Jessica Embury supported the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Alice Lewis discussed the fact that she has tried to contact Simon Foster several times, and he has not returned her calls. Simon has also been absent three times without excuse. She would like to call for the vote to remove Simon Foster as a member of the HRC because of his unexcused absences. Discussion followed regarding the appropriate procedure for removing an HRC member. Staff requested that a letter be sent to Simon Foster advising him of his unexcused absences and the steps for removal from the HRC. It was decided to have this added to the agenda for the next HRC meeting.

D. Events Committee: Jessica Embury reported that there isn't anything coming up until the first of the year. Sue Mure stated that KidsFest was very cool.

1. Picnic Committee: Chair Lewis reported that a meeting was held. Everything is in place including the clown. She reminded everyone to hand out flyers to the community. The picnic is scheduled to be held on August 20th at Ella Sharp Park. Chair Lewis also reported that \$300 has been received in donations. Jessica Embury requested that a donation letter be sent to her so she can share it with others, and Sue Mure reported that there are several people from Red Cross interested in participating. Also, a table will be available for the HRC. Chair Lewis asked that the Veterans be invited to be the honor guard, and that a police car and fire truck also be available. She reviewed the food, and asked for as many passing dishes as possible. Parrish Stahl reported that there will be a blanket media release. He further reported that a door prize was being planned as a way of building a contact list from people submitting their names and addresses. He asked for any input on this idea. Chair Lewis stated that set up is usually around 8 a.m. and the picnic will start at noon. Parrish Stahl also requested volunteers to help with setup and manning the grills. Valerie Cochran-Toops also requested a donation solicitation letter.

XI. **Old Business:**

A. Study Groups, Policy/Procedures, By-laws Discussion:

John Hawthorne said that maybe this should be tabled for a while if the Mayor isn't totally on board with this. The HRC needs to have some sense of whether the Mayor and Council are interested in holding study groups or not. Discussion

followed regarding the HRC's history of holding study groups and the outcome of those groups.

XII. New Business:

- A. Voting – Chair Lewis stated that she feels strongly that everyone should get out to vote, and the HRC should come up with some ideas how to address this to support educating people about voting. Parrish Stahl said that there is a lot of information regarding physical disabilities, and this should be included. Other community programs regarding voting was discussed. Various promotions for voting in the City of Jackson were discussed.
- B. Name Tags – Parrish Stahl asked if the HRC could purchase name tags.
- C. Business Cards – several Commissioners asked about the purchase of business cards for the HRC.
- D. New Brochures – Chair Lewis asked staff to check on the new brochures that were being created by John Willis, as she would like to use them at the upcoming picnic.

XIII. Commission Comments:

Sue Mure apologized for being late to the HRC meeting.

XIV. Ex-Officio Comments:

Val Cochran-Toops reviewed all the programs available regarding voting.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan Greene
Staff