

Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2016

Members Present: Rev. John Clemons, Alice Lewis, Parrish Stahl, Lynn Isaacson-Zolman, John Hawthorne, Sue Mure, Jessica Embury, and Simon Foster

Members Absent:

Ex Officio Present: Val Cochran-Toops

Also Present: Jonathan Greene, Staff, John Willis, and Deputy Director of Public Services Elmer Hitt

- I. **Call to Order/Roll Call:** Staff Jonathan Greene called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call**
- III. A motion was made by Sue Mure to move the election of officers to the beginning of the agenda. Motion supported by John Clemons. Motion carried.
- IV. **Election of Officers for 2016:** Nominations were opened for the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary. John Clemons nominated Alice Lewis as Chair. Parrish Stahl nominated John Hawthorne as Chair. Mr. Hawthorn declined the nomination. Mr. Hawthorne nominated John Clemons as Vice Chair, and Lynn Isaacson-Zolman nominated Suzanne Mure for Secretary. John Clemons made a motion to close the nominations. Alice Lewis supported. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

A motion was made by Parrish Stahl to approve the nomination of officers as a slate vote, Alice Lewis as Chairperson, John Clemons as Vice Chair, and Suzanne Mure as Secretary. The motion was supported by John Hawthorne. The motion carried unanimously voice vote.

Alice Lewis assumed her duties as Chair, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- V. **Adoption of the Agenda:** Motion for agenda approval made by Lynn Zolman seconded by John Clemons. Motion carried unanimously.
- VI. **Citizen Comments:** None.
- VII. **Guest:** None

- VIII. **Community Liaison Police Officer:** Deputy Police Chief Elmer Hitt introduced himself. He spoke about ongoing hiring and promotions. Four officers in the academy and two cadets are to be hired. The final interview will be next week. A Community Specialist for the front desk will be hired. Currently there are four applicants. There have recently been two retirements, both officers with 25 years of service. A Sargeant position will be interviewed. Simon Foster has agreed to sit on the interview panel. Deputy Chief Hitt's former position as Lieutenant is also to be filled since his promotion to Deputy Chief. Applications are being accepted for the Citizen Police Academy. The academy is a ten week program that will start March 1st. The academy will meet on Wednesday evenings for two to three hours. Applicants must be 18 years or older, and the application can be found online. The application must be either directly dropped off with the attention to Elmer Hitt, or an e-mail scan can be sent to him with the application. The Jackson County Sheriff Department is also partnering with this program. Applications for police officer are open for Officer Tim Black's position for replacement when he retires.
- IX. **Approval of December 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes:** Commissioners reviewed the minutes. Amendments to the minutes included noting that Val Cochran-Toops present but was late, the names of Roxanna Dunaway, Preslee Stahl were corrected.
- Motion for the approval of the December 16, 2015, meeting minutes as amended was made by Parrish Stahl and supported by Jessica Embury. The motion carried unanimously.
- X. **Chairperson Correspondence:** None.
- XI. **Staff Report:** Jonathan Greene reported that no complaints were received. He also pointed out that John Willis, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator, will be part of staff support going forward with the HRC staff. John is putting together a report on the diversity plan.
- XII. **Ex-Officio Report:** Val Cochran-Toops reported on the Community Cooperation among groups and reminded the Commissioners of the Gospel Rhythm and Soul Family Festival upcoming events and will provide flyers for more information.
- XIII. **2016 Committees:** 2016 Committees were reviewed and revised. Discussion on each of the committees and what participation is needed.

Nominating Committee: Alice Lewis, Rev. Clemons, Simon Foster, and Jessica Embury. This committee meets as needed.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast/Challenge Day: This committee meets at 7:30 a.m., the last Thursday of the month. Simon Foster and Sue Mure. This is a meeting in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. Rev. Clemons will serve as needed.

Harold White Breakfast: Rev. Clemons, John Hawthorne, and Val Toops.

A request for a copy of the current HRC budget was made of staff, as well as going forward for review at the next meeting to assist with upcoming events.

The Anti-Violence Committee was removed from the committee listing.

The Teresa Delph Essay/Oratorical Contest has been put in recess until 2017. John Clemons recommended Val Toops be the chair of this committee. Mrs. Toops accepted. The Jackson District Library has offered to work with the HRC. The Essay/Oratorical contest is historically held in February for Black History month. Members are Alice Lewis, Parrish Stahl, Lynn Isaacson-Zolman, and Val Toops.

Complaint Committee: Alice Lewis is the only Commissioner who is a mediator on the HRC at this time. Due to confidentiality, only people that are certified mediators may sit on the committee. Further discussion was tabled until the next meeting. Requests to look at the HRC Ordinance and By-laws was made by Simon Foster. A request was made by Jessica Embury to review the last two years of complaints filed with the HRC. Commissioners requested a copy of the HRC Ordinance be provided at the next meeting.

Public Relations Committee: Parrish Stahl requested newsletter information, articles and pictures to get to him as quickly as possible. He would like everything by February 1st if possible. Chair Lewis encourage everyone to have their profile included in the newsletter. Committee members are Parrish Stahl, Jessica Embury, Simon Foster, and John Hawthorne.

HRC Picnic Committee: Alice Lewis, Chair, Parrish Stahl, Lynn Isaacson-Zolman, and Val Toops.

The Events Committee: Jessica Embury, Chair, Simon Foster and Sue Mure.

The Policy Committee needs to be added to the listing and the agenda. Rev. John Clemons, Chair, Alice Lewis, John Hawthorne and Val Toops.

Emergency Needs Coalition: Jessica Embury will provide reports and information reports from 211 also. The last information provided was that top requests for assistance was for rent and food pantry. 2014 top request for electricity and Christmas baskets. In 2014 280 calls were taken and 180 for Utility assistance.

Concern is for food pantries, especially in the last two weeks of the year when most are closed for the holidays. Due to the water crisis in Flint, many more calls are coming in.

Nominating Committee: Alice Lewis reported that an advertisement has gone out to fill the one vacancy and ex-officio positions on the HRC. This advertisement has gone to all media including radio, newspaper and television. A few applications have been received, and it is hoped more will come in. Parrish Stahl recommended getting ahold of media to assist. Jessica Embury also will send out to 211 about the vacant positions.

XIV. Old Business:

a. Quarterly Film Series:

Jessica Embury reported that it is difficult to find solid partners to assist with the cost. She will also be scheduling a meeting for the Events Committee to set an agenda for the upcoming year.

b. Other:

Val Toops asked about possibly have a table at the Jackson County Fair this year. Concerns about staffing the table were voiced. Also, a discussion was held about options for raising funds for events.

Further discussion from John Hawthorne about the budget. As mentioned, staff will provide a full breakdown to the Commission at the next meeting.

Val Toops reminded everyone of the Gospel Family Revival held in August. She will speak to the group for more information to be provided.

John Hawthorne agreed to follow up with the City Councilmembers, moving forward with working with them more fully.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Equality Trail Update – Simon Foster reported there is no movement, but with further discussion, it is no longer an issue involved with the HRC other than for diversity purposes.

XV. New Business:

Simon Foster recommended a new pathway to follow the Ordinance, and to get together to create a new strategic plan going forward. Parrish Stahl agreed and mentioned that the Commission should also look at the current strategic plan that is already in place. Chairs of committees will send e-mails out to the Commissioners with reports. Chair Lewis stated that she plans to get all Commissioners trained and together, and will provide details and information to the Secretary to distribute.

Sue Mure stated that she will create a new e-mail specific for HRC duties so commissioners and staff will recognize her e-mails as business.

John Hawthorne agreed to go over budget with Jonathan Greene.

The Policy Committee will move forward.

Jessica Embury recommended that the Events Committee reports to fall under Public Relations.

Val Toops reported on hearing from people in the community asking about the HRC and what the HRC role is in the community. Discussion regarding providing information on the City's website and social media.

Jessica Embury asked staff if any further contact was made by the guest speaker from the December 2015 meeting, and Jonathan Greene responded that none had been received. Simon Foster stated that Mr. Lame had contacted him, but no further information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzanne Mure".

Suzanne Mure
Secretary