

Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2016

Members Present: Alice Lewis, Rev. John Clemons, Parrish Stahl, Jessica Embury, and Sue Mure.

Members Absent: Lynn Isaacscon-Zolman, John Hawthorne (exc.), and Simon Foster.

Ex Officio Present: Valerie Cochran-Toops.

Also Present: Jonathan Greene, Staff, John Willis, Staff, 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 made by Jessica Embury, supported by John Clemons. Motion carried.
- IV. **Citizen Comments:** None.
- V. **Guest:** None.
- VI. **Approval of Minutes for April 20, 2016 Meeting:** Motion made by Parrish Stahl to accept the April 20, 2016, meeting minutes as submitted, supported by Sue Mure, and motion carried.
- VII. **Community Liaison Police Officer:** Lt. Williams updated the Commission on events the Police Department has been involved in the past month. The Citizen's Police Academy is about done. There are a couple more weeks left. He has received some positive feedback from participants and graduation is in June. JPD is in the process of hiring two new police officers. Deputy Chief Hitt has been in contact with the Southeastern Dispute Resolution Services, and the patrol officers have been in training to learn what services they offer. Discussion followed regarding complaints about the County Jail and how to get them addressed. The HRC complaint process was also discussed. Valerie asked if Jackson is a "Sanctuary City?" Lt. Williams stated that he did not know.
- VIII. **Community Update/Chairperson's Correspondence:** Chair Lewis said that she had no report.
- IX. **Staff Report:** No Staff report.

Financial report: No change.

X. **Ex-Officio Report:** Valerie Cochran-Toops reported that she participated in a fund raiser at First Congregational Church, the homeless veteran's walk, and she has received concerns from citizens about rental rates going up and eviction rates. Parrish Stahl stated that if the rental rates are through government funding, then people should be referred to the Fair Housing Center, Legal Aid and Community Action Agency.

XI. **Committee Reports:**

A. Complaint Committee: No report.

B. Public Relations: Parrish Stahl reported on what is included in the new Newsletter. He encouraged commissioners to submit a profile to be included in the newsletter monthly. He further reported that there is still no handicapped parking downtown, even after this being discussed with City staff. He reported that the DisAbility Connections is getting daily complaints about no handicapped parking in the downtown area, and expressed his concern. John Willis stated that he will look into this, and give a report at the next meeting. He also has two people focus articles: a feature piece on Vice Mayor Derek Dobies, and a highlight on former radio personality Cash McCall. He would like to cover the upcoming HRC picnic. Parrish would also like to do a profile on each HRC Commissioner starting with Alice Lewis. Once this article is completed the newsletter will be ready to go to print.

He also offered to bring a camera to the next HRC meeting to take individual pictures of HRC Commissioners for the City's website. Jessica Embury stated that she would send in a headshot photo.

C. Policy Report to be discussed in Old Business per John Clemons.

D. Nominating Committee: The Commission agreed to move forward with interviews. Chair Lewis assigned John Clemons as chair of the Nominating Committee until Simon Foster indicates what his intentions are regarding serving on the HRC.

E. Events Committee: Jessica Embury gave a report on the KidsFest. She asked for help with candy and games. John Willis offered to help with the games. Jonathan Greene reported that the application for KidsFest needs to be approved by the City Council due to some insurance issues. Jonathan will order a trifold presentation display to be used at this event.

1. Picnic Committee: Chair Lewis reported that she plans to have a committee meeting to plan the picnic soon. The date of the picnic is July 9, 2016. John Willis will reserve the ramada at Ella Sharp Park for the picnic.

F. Emergency Needs Coalition: Jessica Embury distributed and reviewed a report on assistance available in the community. Also, there is an event on June 15th at Sand Hill Crane Vineyards from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. An RSVP is needed.

XII. **Old Business:**

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

John Clemons clarified the complaint process for the HRC, and how the process came about. John expressed concern about not hearing about any complaints in the past two years. Staff and Chair Lewis explained that many complaints get dealt with on the telephone, and resolved before becoming an official HRC Complaint. Discussion followed regarding the need to let the public know that the HRC is available to receive complaints from citizens to mediate. John offered to write an article for the HRC newsletter and for Blazer. Chair Lewis asked that the article be submitted to the City's newsletter as well.

XIII. **New Business:**

Chair Lewis reported that she wants to keep the HRC meeting's moving so that they don't last until 8:00 p.m. Therefore, she will try to shorten the agenda. She also reported that after reviewing the HRC funds, staff advised that it would be best if the HRC not do a full page ad for \$250.00 as planned at the last HRC meeting for the Gospel Rhythm and Soul Family Festival. She said that a smaller ad may be purchased for a lesser amount. The HRC will sponsor a table at the MLK Breakfast because this is function the HRC is a partner with the Chamber of Commerce. The HRC will also work with the Harold White Breakfast, which honors the hero's of Jackson; the Teresa Delph Essay and Oratorical Contest, which is educational, and the HRC Picnic. Jessica Embury asked if someone attended the MLK Breakfast/Challenge Day committee meeting.

John Willis also encouraged the Commissioners to do more e-mailing and interacting with each other prior to the HRC meeting, so that everyone is informed and up-to-date before attending an HRC meeting as a way to expedite the HRC meetings. This way the meetings will be mostly to take any action needed on agenda items.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Mure
Secretary