

Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2016

Members Present: Alice Lewis, Parrish Stahl, Jessica Embury, John Hawthorne, Lynn Isaacson-Zolman, Melissa Morse, Rev. John Clemons, and Suzanne Mure.

Members Absent:

Ex Officio Present: Valerie Cochran-Toops, and Hassan Ahmad.

Also Present: John Willis, Staff, Deputy Director of Police and Fire Services Elmer Hitt, Diane Everett, and Susan Murdie,

- I. **Call To Order:** By Chairwoman Alice Lewis at 6:30 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call:**
- III. **Adoption of the Agenda:** Motion to adopt the Agenda was made by John Hawthorne, and supported by Jessica Embury. Motion carried.
- IV. **Citizen Comments (3-Minute Limit):**
Several comments were received and presented by citizens who were referred to file a formal complaint and referral for follow up.
- V. **Guest:** None.
- VI. **Approval of the Meeting Minutes for August 17, 2016:** Motion made by Parrish Stahl to accept the August 17, 2016, meeting minutes as submitted, and supported by Melissa Morse. Motion carried.
- VII. **Community Liaison Police Officer:** Deputy Director of Police and Fire Services Elmer Hitt spoke to the Commission and said he would follow up by talking with staff about the citizen who first spoke to the HRC under Citizen Comments. He said he will follow up on this with Lt. Simpson and Staff.

He further informed the HRC that Det. Gary Schuette will retire on September 23, 2016. There are currently five applications that were received and are being reviewed. He went on to discuss recruitment issues. He spoke of the Cadet program. There are two female cadets in the program. One will be sent to the Police Academy leaving one opening. They are looking at advertising to get a good pool of applicants, and are open to any suggestions.

Jackson County Human Services Alliance has three applications and \$9,000.00 in grant funds pertaining to community education videos and non-profit community projects with

the hope to get at least one of the three. Regina Funkhouser is working with the Police Department on this.

Deputy Director Hitt answered several questions pertaining to the Cadet Program such as time frame, pay, qualifiers, and non-qualifiers.

Jessica Embury asked that the Police Department notify the HRC whenever they are holding a public meeting regarding issues in the community relating to the HRC. Chair Lewis suggested that the heads of each group concerned about issues in the City be invited to a meeting to discuss. There is a possibility that another meeting will be held in October. He will let the HRC know when a meeting will be held. The Police Department wants to build more on community input, building relationships with the community and strengthen trust with police and community.

VIII. **Community Update/Chairperson's Correspondence:** Follow up with committee reports.

IX. **Staff Report:** John Willis reported on the various needs for the Harold White Memorial Breakfast event. There is no finance report as he is still waiting on the final status and will update the HRC in an e-mail.

Complaints: Chair Lewis reported that she received a complaint regarding alleged discrimination from a citizen in Cairo, Michigan. The HRC is unable to assist the complainant and Chair Lewis worked with the complainant by referring her to the State of Michigan representative who was able to get assistance for her daughter and is now resolved.

X. **Committee Reports:**

A. Public Relations and Information – Chair Lewis reported that the City has agreed to allow the HRC have an article in the City's newsletter. She encouraged everyone to come to the next meeting to have their pictures taken. A discussion followed regarding the HRC's presence in the City's newsletter. The HRC will no longer publish a separate newsletter. John Willis stated that the City newsletter now recognizes the HRC information and is working to better communicate and make available to the HRC and keep them included.

Parrish Stahl also reported about the lack of handicapped parking on the downtown street. He met with City Staff and it still hasn't happened after all of the renovation. He stated that the City is in violation of the ADA and will be setting themselves up for a law suit. Four deadlines have come and gone and the issue still is not resolved. John Willis said that he will have more information at the next meeting.

B. Policy Committee - John Clemons - None.

- C. Nominating Committee - John Clemons, Committee Chair, made the recommendation of Hassan Ahmad to the current vacant position of the HRC.

A motion was made by John Clemons and supported by Parrish Stahl to nominate Hassan Ahmad be recommended to fill the current vacancy on the HRC. The motion carried.

Chair Lewis distributed applications to commissioners whose terms are ending December 31, 2016. She would like to have the reappointment recommendations to be voted on at the October meeting. Parrish Stahl stated that he will not be seeking reappointment, but will still be willing to work with the HRC on various issues.

- D. Events Committee - Jessica Embury: None.

1. Harold White Sr. Memorial Breakfast - Alice Lewis: Ms. Lewis reviewed the program for the Harold White Breakfast. The committee met and decide to recognize Molly Kaser, Director of the Center for Family Health, and Rev. A.P. Williams (Posthumus) for their work in the Jackson community. HRC commissioners will have to purchase their own tickets, and the Harold White family will be given free tickets. A buffet breakfast will be held at Cascades Manor House on October 19th at 7:30 a.m. The Keynote speaker will be Terry Langston. The invocation will be given by Rev. Darrius Williams, Second Missionary Baptist Church. Chair Lewis further reviewed the proposed program. All Commissioners are requested to attend the event.

A motion was made by John Hawthorne to officially nominate Molly Kaser and Rev. A.P. Williams as the recipients of the 2016 Harold White Sr. Memorial Awards. Jessica Embury supported the motion. The motion carried.

2. Teressa Delph Essay/Oratorical Contest – Valerie Cochran Toops stated that a committee meeting will be held in the near future after the Harold White Breakfast. Hassan Ahmad agreed to work on this committee also.

XI. **Old Business:**

None.

XII. **New Business:**

Questions that were requested why the Mayor and City Manager were not at the HRC meeting. John Willis stated that he would invite them again to the next HRC meeting. He also asked for a list of questions that will be asked to give to them to review. Sue Mure stated that she would send an outline of questions she has.

The HRC reviewed a recent invitation to attend the Humanities in Flight program at the Jackson County Airport. The Commission decided due to the cost they would be unable to attend as a group, however, if members wish to attend on their own they are welcome to do so.

XIII. **Commissioner's Comments:** Sue Mure spoke about her visit to the last City Council meeting and issues that the HRC needs to keep on their radar moving forward. Parrish Stahl reported that he is working with disAbility Connections and the City on the "Get Out The Vote" effort. John Hawthorne reported on a fourth annual Human Trafficking conference to be held on October 15, 2016. He will e-mail the information to commissioners. Parrish Stahl said that he is excited to hear people are talking about this and that other communities have the ordinance in place, and have not received one complaint.

XIV. **Ex-Officio Comments:**
Hassan Ahmad thanked the Commission for recommending him for appointment, and is excited to serve.

XV. **Adjournment.**

Respectfully submitted,



Suzanne Mure
Secretary