

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2017

Members Present: Rev. John Clemons, Chair Alice Lewis, Melissa Morse, John Hawthorne, Jessica Embury, Suzanne Mure, Russell Jennings, Miriam Brown Dorsey, Val Cochran-Toops

Members Absent: None

Ex Officio Present: None

Also Present: Staff John Willis, Staff Jonathan Greene, City Manager Patrick Burtch

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman A. Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call:** Roll Call done by S. Mure.
- III. **Adoption of Agenda:** Motion by J. Hawthorne to adopt the agenda adding Shannon Skarritt as a guest. Supported by J. Embury. Motion carried.
- IV. **Citizen Comment:**
Resident Israel Gray spoke about starting a non-profit organization to address gun violence/community issues and recognize first responders. He will be meeting with Michigan Works to organize and will keep HRC informed on progress.
- V. **Guest:** Shannon Skarritt, development director of Salvation Army. Spoke about the Food Pantry and hunger issues in Jackson County. The need is continuing to increase and they are always looking for community support for serving and volunteering opportunities, especially during the Christmas season. She passed out an impact report, information on all the work they are doing in the community and asked HRC to help support their efforts in any way possible. She reported that the bell ringers raise an average \$150,000 that stays in the community; \$.82 of every dollar goes directly towards programs and services in Jackson. The Salvation Army also has a community center which is a safe place for at-risk teens and young adults. They offer open gym night Tuesday's and Thursday's.

Chair Lewis said the HRC will continue to support and promote the Salvation Army.

Rev. Clemons thanked the Salvation Army support during the summer block party.
- VI. **Community Liaison Police Officer:** None
- VII. **Approval of the Meeting Minutes for October 18, 2017.**
Approval of the October 18, 2017 meeting minutes by Rev. Clemons. Support by R. Jennings. Motion carried.

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. **Nominating Committee:** Rev. Clemons asked for a motion to recommend to Mayor and Council, reappointments for Commissioners A. Lewis, J. Hawthorne, J. Embury and the consideration of the appointment of three ex-officio positions. Motion by S. Mure. Support by Rev. Clemons. S. Mure amended the motion to make the consideration of appointments of the three ex-officios as a secondary motion. Support by Rev. Clemons. Motion carried.

Rev. Clemons reported that the nominating committee interviewed six applicants and is recommending three to the Mayor and Council:

Teresa Blom, Krissy Kerwin, Cheryl Lynn Ragland

The other three: H. Oliver, R. Picket, P. O'Dowd, will go back into the pool of applicants and will stay on file with the city for one year.

M. Morse made a motion to accept the recommendation of T. Blom, K. Kerwin, S. Ragland as suggested by the Nominating Committee. Support by Rev. Clemons. Discussion on proper protocol for recommending new commissioners to the Mayor and Council. City Manager P. Burtch spoke about more communication with the Mayor on future commissioners. HRC members showed concern that they didn't have information on new applicants and would like to have time to review before making decisions. Information on all new candidates should be sent to each commissioner.

After discussion, M. Morse withdraws motion. Motion is withdrawn.

IX. Old Business:

Chair Lewis spoke about the Candidate Forum being a very successful event. M. Morse spoke about Challenge Day and how much of a positive impact the experience is for students and student relations. She also mentioned the need to have follow up on these kinds of programs and collaboration between community groups to continue to help students.

X. New Business

MLK Challenge Day breakfast will be January 12, 2018 at Gene Davis. Rev. Clemons to give the 'Send Forth.' HRC will have a table available through the City. A Martin Luther King Dinner will be held on January 13th at Jackson College. HRC is asked to be present.

HRC Christmas Party to be held at Bella Notte Ristorante on December 6th.

No HRC meeting in December, Motion made by Rev. Clemons to confirm no December meeting. Support by R. Jennings. Motion carried.

Annual Report to be worked on and completed in December and ready for January meeting. Staff Willis will work on with M. Morse.

Essay Contest Committee will meet in December to get an earlier start than last year. Chair Lewis discussed doing evaluations for the commissioners and board members.

S. Mure discussed HRC working to continue protecting special needs students in the school systems concerning policies under new Education Administration.

XI. Commissioner Comments

Chair Lewis spoke about successful HRC goal setting accomplishments in 2017, and mentioned how well each committee has done. HRC has increased community outreach and had a special speaker present at each meeting. She looks forward to continued success in 2018.

Rev. Clemons discussed the gun violence forum held at the MLK Center, how the HRC can be a more active voice and concerns with having more effective forums in the future. Staff Willis mentioned the forum was not a city event. HRC continued to discuss gun violence in the city.

Commissioned discussed ways to extend our outreach and Rev. Clemons reinforced that the HRC form new committees to extend outreach where it is needed most.

M. Brown Dorsey spoke about looking forward to upcoming orientation for HRC members.

J. Embury spoke about ways the HRC can extend outreach.

M. Morse stated that she was proud to be part of a passionate commission.

Staff Willis reminded everyone about the HRC orientation Oct 19th.

J. Hawthorne spoke about the importance of the ordinance and the ten items that the HRC is charged with upholding. He spoke about the importance of utilizing the ordinance to address issues and problem solve.

S. Mure spoke about having a great meeting and how it takes a lot of work to be effective and there is no instant gratification. HRC needs to continue to be present at meetings and involved in community.

R. Jennings spoke about a free grocery giveaway. McThirstys sponsored by Pollys will give away 200 bags of free groceries at the Michigan Center Eagles, Tuesday, November 22nd, 5 p.m. First come first serve. Any volunteers/donations are appreciated.

V. Toops spoke about meeting with the People for Peace on ways to become more involved in helping community issues. She also spoke about concerns with changes in the Medical Marijuana laws, and curfews not being enforced in the city.

Chair Lewis thanked everyone for their good work. She also officially welcomed V. Cochran-Toops, R. Jennings and M. Brown Dorsey. Discussed upcoming committee assignments and all the great work HRC is planning for 2018. November 20th Second Missionary Baptist Church will be doing free Thanksgiving boxes for families in need.

Motion to adjourn made by S. Mure. Support by Rev. Clemons. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Morse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Melissa Morse
Secretary