

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2018

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

Members Absent: None

Ex Officio: Cheryl Ann Ragland, Krissy Kerwin (excused)

Also Present: Staff John Willis, Lt. Adam Williams, Alan Gamble, Joseph Beaman, Daniel Mahoney, Hassan Ahmad, and Israel Grey

I. Call to Order: Chairwoman Alice Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call.

III. Adoption of Agenda:

John Hawthorne made a motion to amend the agenda under committee reports to add the public relations committee report, events committee report and the nominating committee report, and under new business to discuss diversity initiatives. Support by John Clemons and seconded by Sue Mure. Motion carried.

IV. Citizens Comment:

Alan Gamble spoke about presenting, "Me the Other," movie event in Jackson on April 7, 2018. He encourages community viewing to assist the City to address the concerns related to the Sheriff Rand issue.

Joseph Beaman spoke about the movie documentary the "13th". The movie surrounds historical references related to the effects of "Jim Crow" laws and the relationship with discrimination. There will be a follow up to the movie with panel discussion from community leaders. This movie also compliments the viewing of, "Me the Other".

Daniel Mahoney thanked the commission for the opportunity to speak about a 4H Inner City Youth program that meets in the City of Jackson the 3rd Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. He will be seeking HRC support for the, "8th Annual Back to School Bash," hosted at the King Center. He thanked John Willis for all of his support helping to make the event a success. He requested the HRC make an official statement concerning the Sheriff Steve Rand issue. He feels that Sheriff Rand should be removed from his position and not be able to receive training, or help, using taxpayer funding. Mr. Mahoney feels that this issue has

been the biggest “black eye” on the City and County of Jackson, and has undermined the community efforts to improve relations in Jackson.

Hassan Ahmad spoke commending the HRC for taking a stance about the Sheriff Steve Rand issue. He echoes and reinforced Mr. Mahoney’s sentiments denouncing the Sheriff’s disgusting comments. He also reflected on the strong Law Enforcement & community relations in Jackson being positive and praised the advances in public safety.

Israel Grey commented on a spelling correction in the meeting minutes. He also spoke in agreement with the previous speakers about the Sheriff Steve Rand issue, and that after having listened to the actual audio recordings on YouTube, he has changed his opinion and no longer supports Sheriff Steve Rand. He is initiating a petition drive to remove the Sheriff and he would appreciate any volunteers to help him. He also reported he had been physically assaulted at a county commission meeting.

V. Guest:
None.

VI. Approval of the Meeting Minutes:

Sue Mure motioned to make a correction to the spelling of “Sentinel Knight Riders Against Child Abuse”. Supported by John Hawthorne. Motion carried.

John Hawthorne moved to amend the section under commissioner comments with the addition to item XI, correction of the commissioner’s comments, to include Miriam Brown Dorsey in place of Val Toops in the January 17, 2018 meeting minutes. Supported by Sue Mure. Motion carried to approve the minutes as amended.

John Clemons moved the minutes be accepted with the necessary corrections. Supported by Miriam Brown Dorsey. Motion carried.

VII. Community Liaison Police Officer:

Lt. Adam Williams, Jackson Police Department, gave an update about the Police Department staffing has five open vacancies. He announced hiring for open positions. Cadet position is also currently available and there are discussions on expanding the program. He announced an event on April 23, 2018 “Strengthening the relationships between the community and law enforcement through conversations about race” to be held at the Kellogg Center in Lansing.

He spoke briefly on the recent officer involved shooting. Lt. Williams answered various questions from the HRC.

VIII. Committee Reports:

- a. Nominating Committee - Chairman Rev. Clemons gave a report of the Nominating Committee. He presented James Johnson Jr. to the commission and asked Chair Alice Lewis and the HRC to accept him as an ex-officio.

A motion was made by Rev. Clemons to accept James Johnson Jr. as an ex officio. Supported by Sue Mure. Motion carried.

- b. The Teresa Delph Oratorical/Essay Contest will be cancelled this year and will start again in 2019. Alice Lewis will be doing a “Tony Lewis Foundation for Special Needs Students” through the Second Missionary Baptist Church in the memory of Tony Lewis for students at the Frost Elementary School where he worked. The Picnic will be held on July 14, 2018 CP City Square and Horace Blackman Park in downtown Jackson. The documentary film series on diversity has been approved with the support from the budget. HRC will be supporting the free movie and discussion panel.
- c. Public Relations Committee met and gave a report on past participation for HRC events with suggestions on improving participation. Sue Mure made a motion to combine the committees of Harold White Breakfast, the MLK Breakfast & Challenge Day event, HRC Annual Picnic committee with the events committee to become one “Events Committee” with the exclusion of the Teresa Delph Oratorical Contest being separate and shall remain on its own. Supported by Jessica Embury. Motion carried.

IX. Old Business: None

X. New Business:

- a. John Hawthorne moved to accept the adoption of 2017 Annual Report with spelling corrections and remove redundant word “better” to page 11 wording. Supported by Sue Mure. Motion carried.
- b. John Hawthorne moved to take an action to hold off on item b until the HRC Strategic Planning meeting. Supported by Miriam Brown Dorsey. Motion carried.

- c. John Hawthorne moved to have the April 18, 2018 HRC meeting begin at 5:00 p.m. for an Executive Session to hold a Strategic Planning meeting, call out of the executive session at 6:30 p.m., then the roll call, citizen comments, approve the minutes, and if necessary, we will return and complete the strategic planning meeting time in executive session at the meeting. Supported by Miriam Brown Dorsey. Discussion was held. Motion carried.
- d. John Hawthorne made a motion to be on record to support for the HRC four events: 1. To be on the record the HRC position on the Sheriff Steve Rand issue; 2. To hold a public forum on April 19, 2018 at the King Center concerning the Sheriff Steve Rand issue; 3. Showing of the movie the "13th" on April 13, 2018, and 4. A community focus discussion by the HRC on book of the year "the New Jim Crow" TBA. Supported by Sue Mure. Discussion. Motion carried.
- e. John Clemons moved to accept draft and approve a statement supporting the City Council's resolution on Sheriff Rand to be released about Sheriff Rand. Supported by Russ Jennings. Motion carried.

XI. Commissioners Comments:

Russell Jennings, Miriam Brown Dorsey, Sue Mure no comment, Val Toops, Jessica Embury, John Hawthorne, Melissa Morse, John Clemons, and ex-officio Cheryl Lynn Ragland and James Johnson Jr. offered comments.

John Willis stated information will be available on procedure and protocol for the HRC to FOIA historical information on crime incidents in Jackson County.

XII. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Russell Jennings at 8:35 p.m. Supported by Sue Mure. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Cochran Toops

Valerie Cochran-Toops

Secretary