HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 19, 2003

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF
Gilbert Blanks	Kathleen Conley	Henry L. Jenkins
Teressa Delph		
Alice Lewis		GUESTS
Ed Peterson		Mike Sims, Community Development
Thomas Ramundo		Ron Davis, Blazer News
Will Riley		Karen Heard, Napoleon Library
Robert Whitman		Richard Lawson

1. CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting was called to order by Chairman Riley at 6:35 p.m. Invocation was given by Rev. Thomas Ramundo. Roll call was taken.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS:
Richard Lawson introduced himself and spoke briefly to the Commission about his interest in working with the HRC in the future.

Karen Heard, Jackson District Library Branch Manager at Napoleon, introduced herself and gave a presentation of her programs at the Napoleon Branch. The programs are focused on African Heritage for February which included African Folktales story hour, teen crafts, crafts - bead making, Harvest Mask African American research and many other programs. Attendance has been 200 participants for some events, and McCulloch School closed their school to attend the folk tales. She also reported that they have had calls and inquiry from the surrounding communities such as Adrian and others.

For March the focus will be Irish Heritage, April will be British Heritage and Spring Arbor College Choir. Future projects will be Civil War Musters and 102nd U.S. Troops.

A discussion followed the presentation. A motion was made by Robert Whitman and supported by Gilbert Blanks to sponsor $250 to support the Civil War Musters project at the Napoleon Branch Jackson District Library. The motion carried.

Mike Sims, Community Development Department, gave a brief report regarding the Community Development Block Grant process. He distributed the proposals for this year's consideration. Mr. Sims reported that the Federal Government has not yet set a dollar amount on what the City of Jackson will receive. Program income has been received for housing rehabilitation as well as code enforcement fees. A total of 26 CDBG applications were received. Two of the applications were not eligible for various reasons. Mr. Sims asked for comments for which the HRC would like to see funded.

Robert Whitman expressed his concern that approximately half of the CDBG budget was preliminarily allocated by the City Council to the Housing Inspection Department, when many of the programs that directly affect the welfare of children and others was not funded. Mr. Sims responded that the City is receiving grants and funding for rehabilitating homes. He further explained the program and that the City Council had

indicated that their priority is housing. A new construction project will be started soon using HOME and federal funds. These will be put on vacant tax reverted property.

Will Riley urged the Commissioners to review the proposals and come back next month with some suggestions with what should be funded.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:
Chairman Riley asked if there were any corrections to the January 15, 2003, meeting minutes. Having no corrections, the minutes were accepted as presented.

4. COMMUNITY UPDATE/CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE:
Staff reported on a summit on racism workshop to be held in Grand Rapids on March 25, 2003. The deadline for registration is March 14, 2003. The speaker for the workshop is Desmond Tutu.

5. STAFF REPORT:
Staff reviewed the financial reports. He also reported that the 2003-2004 Fiscal Year Budget will be status quo.

Chairman Riley asked if there were any questions or corrections to the financial report. Having no corrections, the financial reports were accepted as presented.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Community Needs - No report.

Diversity Training - No report.

Proposed Civil Rights Ordinance - No report.

HRC Director -
A discussion took place about a Human Relations Director. Chairman Riley reported that some communities do have full-time directors and see that there is a need here. He said he doesn't think it would happen over night, but an action plan should be initiated and looked at.

A motion was made by Thomas Ramundo and supported by Gilbert Blanks that Chairman Riley assemble an action plan including a feasibility study to pursue an HRC Director position. Motion carried.

Labor and Industry -
Will Riley stated that he would contact the trainer and set up some training for interested HRC members for those interested in becoming mediators.

Diversity/Minority Employment/City - Teressa Delph
Staff reported that the City's EEOC report no longer includes the Jackson Housing Commission. Without Jackson Housing Commission the City's employment is below targeted goals. Chairman Riley stated that this is something that needs to be kept watch on.

Public Relations and Information - Ed Peterson
Ed Peterson reported that he is still waiting for a response from Councilmember Breeding regarding the Oneness of Humankind resolution. He indicated that this would not be coming before the City Council any time soon.

Chairman Riley asked for a motion to table this subject until the climate is more favorable. Discussion followed. It was decided to keep this subject on the agenda.

Communication with City Council - Alice Lewis
Alice Lewis reported that she had attended a City Council meeting with the then Chairman Blanks, and that he gave a very good HRC report.

Ms. Lewis stated that she would contact Matthew Sherrod regarding the possibility of scheduling a meeting with the Police Chief regarding numbers.

She also attended a meeting regarding street renaming. A discussion took place about the street renaming for Harold White. Chairman Riley stated that he would like to get a committee together to work on this. This committee would include the NAACP and other organizations. Alice Lewis volunteered to work on this committee.

Nominating Committee - Thomas Ramundo
Thomas Ramundo reported that the nominating committee met prior to the HRC meeting, and interviewed four people for the vacancy created by Rosmarie Herbert's seat. The committee is prepared to recommend two people that may be sent to the Mayor and Council for their consideration. Those applicants are, Kelly Ellis and Parrish Stahl. Rev. Ramundo reviewed each of the people that interviewed. There were a total of 16 or 17 applicants of which six were invited to interview. Four of the six responded.

The HRC discussed the applicants. Chairman Riley commended the committee on the work they had accomplished. The HRC voted to recommend Kelly Ellis to be forwarded to the Mayor for his consideration. Kelly Ellis is a City resident.

A motion was made by Gilbert Blanks to extend an invitation to Dr. Constance Johnson and Parrish Stahl to become ex-officio members of the HRC. The motion was supported by Alice Lewis. The motion carried.

7. OLD BUSINESS:
Gilbert Blanks gave a Study Circle Orientation update. He reported that there are two pilot groups. One will be held on Mondays beginning March 3 at 6:00 p.m. and the other will meet on Thursdays, beginning March 6 at 8:00 a.m. at City Hall. Mr. Blanks reported that he felt that perhaps a payment of $100 to the facilitators of the Study Circle would be in order. He asked for feedback and direction from the HRC regarding this. Staff recommended that the four week process be completed and then review. Chairman Riley recommended that the HRC wait to make a commitment until participation is reviewed. Discussion followed. Mr. Blanks stated that he would bring a report back at the March meeting of how the Study Circles are going.

Teressa Delph updated the Commission on the Oratorical Contest. All information has been sent to the schools. Essays are due on Friday, February 21, 2003. Teressa Delph asked committee members to confirm people to serve as judges.

8. NEW BUSINESS:
Election of Vice Chairman and Secretary for 2003:

Alice Lewis nominated Robert Whitman for Vice Chairman. There was no opposition. Nomination was closed. A motion was made by Thomas Ramundo and supported by Alice Lewis to nominate Robert Whitman as Vice Chairman of the HRC. The motion carried unanimously.

Alice Lewis nominated Teressa Delph to remain as secretary of the HRC. The nomination was closed. A motion was made by Thomas Ramundo and supported by Gilbert Blanks to nominate Teressa Delph as Secretary of the HRC. The motion carried.

Film Festival
Gilbert Blanks reported that the film recommended, "The Water Dance," was pretty racey and did not recommend it to be viewed. He did, however, recommend another movie called, "The Mighty." Discussion followed regarding where to hold the next Film Festival. Chairman Riley appointed Alice Lewis, Gilbert Blanks, Thomas Ramundo, and Teressa Delph to bring back a report on a film for the Film Festival at the next HRC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teressa T. Delph

Teressa Delph
Secretary