

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall
February 20, 2002
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gilbert Blanks
Teresa Delph
Rosemarie Herbert
Ed Peterson
Thomas Ramundo
Will D. Riley
Robert Whitman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kathleen Conley (exc.)
Alice Lewis

STAFF PRESENT:

Henry Jenkins, Staff
Lt. Mary Jo Kennedy, Police

GUEST:

Dr. Constance Johnson
National Center for Healing
Racism

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman Blanks at 6:35 p.m. Roll call was taken.
2. Citizen Comment:
None.
3. Guest:
Dr. Constance Johnson, Director, National Resource Center for Healing Racism, addressed the Commission. She gave an update of what her group was doing in the area of training. Whatever the needs, they can address those issues. Her office is located at Starr Commonwealth in Albion, Michigan. She can help organize cluster groups. They are funded by grants. Dr. Johnson answered questions that members had.
4. Police Liaison's Report:
Lt. Mary Jo Kennedy gave an update on Community Policing programs. She answered questions HRC members had.
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes:
A motion was made by Ed Peterson to approve the January 16, 2002, minutes. The motion was amended by Rosemarie Herbert to reflect a correction of Thomas Ramundo having an excused absence. The amended motion was supported by Robert Whitman to approve the minutes of January 20, 2002. The amended motion carried.
6. Chairman's Correspondence/Community Update -
No report.

7. Staff Report:

Staff reviewed the financial report. Also Henry reviewed a letter from Janice Fairley, Jackson County Branch NAACP President. She requested the HRC participate in a golf tournament named for Harold White. Janice needs a commitment to play in the tournament. A discussion followed.

Discussion took place regarding the Black History Month program through the Jackson District Library. Chairman Blanks reported that he reviewed the tape and approved it. Staff indicated that he has not heard anything back from the Library regarding this.

Rosemarie Herbert made a motion to accept the Staff Report. Will Riley supported the motion. The motion carried.

8. Committee Reports:

Community Needs Committee - Gilbert Blanks, Chairman

Chairman Blanks said that the mentoring program is ongoing at the high school. Rosemarie Herbert suggested the HRC look at the possibility of starting a mentoring program in the Middle School, because most children start having their problems in the Middle School. Chairman Blanks reported that he had talked with Mr. Hiram about this and that his concern was that a person was needed in the building who can spearhead the program there. Also another concern was volunteers. Lt. Kennedy reported that there is a program at the Middle School called NEON that does address some of the issues the mentoring program addresses. Discussion followed regarding the different programs that are being offered.

Teressa Delph gave an update on the Oratorical Contest to be held March 23, 2002. The theme for the contest is, "How Do You Think 9-11 Changed The Way We Treat Each Other?" This theme will be for all grades and the contest will be held at Jackson Crossing from 1-5 p.m. She reported that she is working on getting judges and asked any commissioners wishing to help to please do so. She also reported that the program seems to be progressing really well.

Labor and Industry Committee: Rosemarie Herbert, Chairman

Rosemarie Herbert reported that there were no new complaints received.

Public Relations Committee: Ed Peterson, Chairman

Ed Peterson reported he had contacted the newspaper regarding HRC activities.

Staff presented some potential posters that Kathleen Conley had created for the HRC. He also reported that Robert Whitman had agreed to go on the local radio station WKHM the day after the HRC meetings to give a report on the meeting. Staff asked that HRC members approve funding so the posters can be produced. Gilbert Blanks stated that the wording on one of the posters could be adjusted. Robert Whitman wanted to go on

record commending Kathy for taking the initiative to create the posters. All agreed that this was a good start. It was decided to wait until Kathleen returns to the HRC meeting to discuss and make a decision.

Ad Hoc Committee - Civil Rights Ordinance

Rosemarie Herbert reported that the committee was able to get a letter from the immediate past president of the Jackson Area Manufacturing Association(JAMA), that said that they had read the proposed civil rights ordinance, and that there was nothing in the ordinance that was in conflict with either their hiring or personnel policies. She also talked with Susan Milhoan with Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Milhoan indicated to her that she is determined that their members will sign a letter that says the same thing. "There is nothing in the proposed civil rights ordinance that in is in conflict with either a hiring or personnel policy." She further reported that Tim Levy had given her permission to call companies and use his name when requesting the company to write letters in support of the proposed ordinance.

Chairman Blanks added that he had spoken with Councilmember Rockwell, and she indicated that she was very supportive of the proposed ordinance. Chairman Blanks stated that he had asked her to possibly lobby Councilmember Eichenberg. In speaking with her at a later date Councilmember Rockwell indicated that Councilmember Eichenberg was noncommittal. Staff suggested approaching Councilmember Breeding to lobby Councilmember Eichenberg. Staff said that he could speak with Councilmember Breeding.

Ad Hoc Committee - Cluster Groups

A lengthy discussion took place about the recent NCCJ workshop held on January 26, 2002. Chairman Blanks reported that he has scheduled a meeting with Linda West, NCCJ, on March 6, 2002, to discuss logistics and details of a training seminar.

A motion was made by Robert Whitman that a letter be written to the Director of NCCJ and include in the letter a clear expression of the HRC's concerns about their performance in Jackson. Also, in the second paragraph or so clarify the financial commitment including exactly what was paid for and what can be expected for the money that has already been paid. The motion was supported by Rosemarie Herbert. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

A discussion took place regarding the designation of a memorial for Harold White. The suggestions were:

1. Southside Neighborhood Resource Center, Francis Street.
2. Fire Station, Milwaukee Street.

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It was decided that the committee will meet with Councilmember Breeding and see what can be done. The Commissioners agreed that this was a good idea.

Rosemarie Herbert made a motion that the HRC contact Mr. Breeding to name the Southside Neighborhood Resource Center for Harold White. Tom Ramundo supported the motion. The motion carried.

Rosemarie Herbert reminded the commission that they had talked about holding their regular meetings in City neighborhoods.

Chairman Blanks reported that his goal was to bring in outside groups to network in March. He stated that he feels the goals are pretty good, but could need some adjustment. A discussion followed. A potential list of groups was made.

Robert Whitman asked for a commissioner to volunteer to go to the radio station with him the next day. Teresa Delph volunteered to go with Commissioner Whitman.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teresa Delph".

Teresa Delph
Secretary