HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 17, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF
Gilbert Blanks	Ed Peterson	Henry L. Jenkins
Kathleen Conley	Rosemarie Herbert (exc)	
Teressa Delph	Thomas Ramundo (exc)	
Alice Lewis		GUESTS
Will Riley		Chuck Meade, GLBT
Robert Whitman		George Brown, Citizen Pat.
		Lt. Mary Jo Kennedy, JPD
		Carl Breeding, Councilmember

1. CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting was called to order by Chairman Blanks at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS:
Chuck Meade, GLBT, addressed the Commissioners regarding the statement "Kick me I'm gay," as described by his daughter that someone put on a student's back. Secondly, he addressed and asked for support of the Ordinance. However, he didn't feel that it should be sent to City Council at this time.

Lt. Mary Jo Kennedy reported that the Police Department delivered door-to-door a new newsletter, "Community Policing Today." The next one will be sent out by mail in September.

Chairman Blanks mentioned a letter that was sent to Chief Portis regarding the Racial Profiling Statistics and asked Lt. Kennedy if a response was near. She reported that he is in the process of working on this. Chairman Blanks further suggested a newsletter be created reporting the racial profiling statistics and may be going door-to-door.

Robert Whitman asked Lt. Kennedy if there were any neighborhood foot patrols in the last few weeks in the City. Lt. Kennedy responded that other than the downtown officers there are the school officers who also serve to protect the central businesses. All of the other officers are supposed to spend time on foot within their area.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:
A motion was made by Robert Whitman to approve the June 19, 2002, minutes. The motion was supported by Will Riley. The motion carried.

4. COMMUNITY UPDATE/CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE:
Chairman Blanks was contacted by Libby Brown about a meeting regarding Buddy Hiram moving to Parkside Middle School. Chairman Blanks asked some of the Commission to attend that meeting, and discuss the future of the mentoring program.

5. STAFF REPORT:
Staff reviewed the financial reports. He further reported that he attended a National Human Rights Workers Conference, and that the Human Rights Workers did approve support of the proposed Ordinance.

Will Riley made a motion to accept the financial report. Kathleen Conley supported the motion. Motion carried.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Community Needs -
Robert Whitman reported that he and Kathleen Conley met recently with the Jackson Citizen Patriot Editorial Board to discuss any concerns they had with the proposed Civil Rights Ordinance. The editors believe that although they are not in favor of discrimination, they believe that the definition of disability and sexual orientation is not defined clear enough in the ordinance. They were also concerned that because the City Council has problems appointing other bodies may have difficulties appointing mediation panels. They were concerned about the clarity of employee rights versus employer rights, as in the possible matter of dress. Another concern was that an employer might be forced to keep or hire personnel which might conflict with their religious beliefs. The HRC present tried to answer some of their concerns. Another concern was the Hoffius case. The Editorial Board expressed support for the concept of the proposed ordinance, but there were some concerns of the wording from the employer's stand point, and concern about source of income and how that might affect landlords if they would be required to take Section 8.

Discussion followed regarding the Chamber of Commerce stand on the proposed ordinance.

Chairman Blanks reported that he had talked with Dr. Phelan, President of Jackson Community College and the President of Baker College regarding the proposed Civil Rights Ordinance. They both personally supported the ordinance, but could not speak for their respective Colleges.

Chairman Blanks reported that he attended the July 16, 2002, City Council meeting to give a report on the HRC. The proposed ordinance was brought up and Councimember Dupuis made a motion to put the proposed ordinance on the ballot in November. Chairman Blanks told them that he did not recommend this.

1st Ward City Councilmember Carl Breeding addressed the Commission and discussion of whether to put the Ordinance on the City Council Agenda or not for their consideration took place. Councilmember Breeding stated that he found the language in the proposed ordinance difficult. He also stated that when trying to pass an ordinance the group doing that must be prepared to answer any questions or concerns. He would like to see the total Commission committed to the adoption of the ordinance. He urged the HRC to bring this to a closure and make a decision on how to handle the situation. However, he did offer his help to put the

proposed ordinance on the City Council Agenda and to make the motion to support if that is what the HRC wants. He also suggested that the HRC request the City Attorney prepare ballot language ready for the next City Council meeting in case this is referred to the vote of the people. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Breeding further addressed the renaming of Francis Street for Harold White. He felt that Chairman Blanks did not answer to the affirmative when questioned by the Council about the renaming of Francis Street. He asked if there was dialog between the HRC Chairman and the City Manager regarding this.

Councilmember Breeding asked that the HRC ask Jackson Public Schools to give a report regarding the State of Blacks in JPS.

Robert Whitman made a motion to discuss the language of the Ordinance at the ad hoc committee meeting and that the Civil Rights Attorneys be involved. Will Riley supported the motion. The motion carried.

Alice Lewis made a motion to have a meeting to finalize the Ordinance on July 31, 2002, at 6:30 p.m. Teressa Delph supported the motion. The motion carried.

Diversity Training - Staff reported that Dr. Constance Johnson is no longer working at Starr Commonwealth, and is working on her own.

Chairman Blanks noted that he would like to meet with the Chamber of Commerce and discuss the possibility of having a diversity award. Another item he wishes to speak to them about is to get a speaker in for the Economic Club Luncheon who would speak about how diversity helps businesses.

Chairman Blanks also reported that the Cojax group will be meeting on July 18. Rosemarie Herbert has agreed to attend. Chairman Blanks asked Rosemarie to mention to one of the members of that group, Kimball Cartwright who works with the Community Foundation, about the possibility of getting a grant for an HRC Executive Director and/or a grant for the Institute of Healing Racism, having Dr. Johnson facilitate it.

Labor and Industry - Staff reported that there were no new complaints. However, a couple of people did stop by the office and may have a complaint filed soon.

Public Relations and Information - Robert Whitman reported that the radio station that he has been working with has changed its programing format and schedule. One of the people from the radio station had been in contact with him to discuss the proposed ordinance further. However, he has been waiting to speak with her until it is finalized.

Kathleen Conley distributed the new HRC posters to HRC members. A discussion followed on how best to disseminate them. Kathleen will develop a plan and report back at the next meeting.

7. OLD BUSINESS:
Designation of Memorial for Harold White
Chairman Blanks reported that he met with the City Manager regarding renaming Francis Street to Harold White Street. The Manager expressed concern that only the part of the street in the City would be named, and that the Council wants to keep all streets the same name from beginning to end. Councilmember Breeding stated that another possibility would be renaming West Avenue. Will Riley reminded commissioners that at the last meeting a motion had been passed to support the NAACP in renaming Francis Street. Discussion followed. Staff recommended that the HRC might want to consider sending a memorandum to the City Council asking for approval of renaming Francis Street for Harold White.

8. NEW BUSINESS:
None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teressa Delph

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Secretary